

Economic Insecurity in Japan—by Joseph Barnes

# The Nation

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## Presidential Possibilities



## Borah Now or Never

by William C. Murphy, Jr.

## 'Let Them Starve!' Says the Senate

*an Editorial*

## Clarence Darrow's "The Story of My Life"

*reviewed by Benjamin Stolberg*

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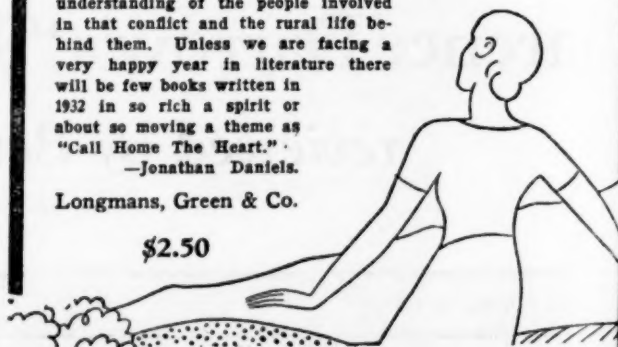
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"I AM GLAD TO REPORT," Mr. Hoover told the newspapermen on February 16, "that since February 4, when I took action on hoarding, there has been an entire turn in the tide. Up to a few days previous to that time hoarding was greatly on the increase. Since that time it has not only stopped, but it is estimated that \$34,000,000 has been returned to circulation from hoarding." There is a discrepancy of some importance between this statement and that made by Mr. Hoover on February 3. In that earlier statement he did not say that hoarding was still greatly on the increase; on the contrary, he told how gratified he already was because of "the dissipation of fear and the restoration of public confidence, as indicated by the fact that recently we have had on balance no increasing in hoarding of currency in the country." When this earlier statement was made, *The Nation* pointed out that the Federal Reserve note figures at the time did not support it; they showed, in fact, an increase in the note issue of \$51,000,000 since the beginning of the year, compared with a decrease of \$187,000,000 and \$226,000,000, respectively, in the two preceding years. No support is found, either, for the President's latest statement that \$34,000,000 has been returned to circulation. The official figures, as of February 17, show total money in circulation to be only \$17,000,000 lower than the week before, and this reduction compares with declines of \$34,000,000, \$21,000,000, and \$53,000,000 in the corresponding

weeks of 1931, 1930, and 1929, respectively. When statements are made by Mr. Hoover that contradict both the official figures and each other, we have one possible clue to the lack of confidence in the country.

MANCHURIA HAS BEEN brought safely within the Japanese fold. The Three Eastern Provinces, to which the Mongolian province of Jehol has now been added, have constituted themselves an "independent" state. To give an appearance of reality to this action, the Japanese have announced that they will not recognize the new state, which has been named Ankuo, until "it shows all the attributes of an independent political entity." But this deceives no one. Manchuria is today as securely in Japanese hands as are Korea, Formosa, and the Pescadores. Ankuo's "declaration of independence" was made public at a dinner held in a Mukden hotel. "There were 108 persons at the dinner," says the Associated Press. "Of these, 25 were Chinese and the rest Japanese, including Count Uchida, president of the South Manchuria Railway, and a number of military and naval officials of Japan who are acting as advisers of the new federated government." Chang Ching-hui, governor of Harbin, later received the foreign correspondents to explain the declaration to them. But, says the *New York Times*, he was attended by a Japanese adviser, who "several times answered questions addressed to Chang Ching-hui without giving the Manchurian leader time for a translation or a reply." Tokio has many times publicly promised that it would respect the territorial integrity of China. The United States, Great Britain, and other parties to the Nine-Power Treaty are formally on record as holding Manchuria to be an integral part of China. But their own solemn pledges and the opinion of the Western Powers mean nothing to the Japanese.

THE FALL OF THE LAVAL GOVERNMENT and the return to the premiership of André Tardieu presages no outward or immediate change in French policy. Both Laval and Tardieu are of the right and hold essentially the same political views. Tardieu is likely to meet the same difficulties in his relations with the senate as those that upset Laval. However, the change is interesting as a maneuver preliminary to the national elections in April or May. The senate is under the control of the parties of the center and left; the chamber has a right majority. Laval was defeated in the senate not because he refused to allow a debate on the Government's policy, which was the immediate occasion for the vote of no confidence, and not because the left or center was anxious to come into the Government or to change Laval's policies, but solely because the left parties wished to use that opportunity to strengthen their position in preparation for the elections. That the left is fighting so determinedly, though it has no real hope or desire of bringing the right majority of the present Chamber of Deputies around to its way of thinking, indicates clearly its confidence that it will make important gains at the polls. This confidence is not without foundation. The increasing intensity of the economic depression and the growing belief that the Laval policies are tending to isolate France in world politics are having their effect upon the French electorate.



**T**HAT ANOMALY, the lame-duck session of Congress, has at last been driven out by that august body itself and sent on its way to ratification, as a constitutional amendment, to the several States. Six times the eminent House of Representatives defeated Senator Norris's bill to end the Congressional short session. When at last the bill passed the House on February 16, there were still 56 noble dissidents to protest it, but 335 favorable votes assured its passage. When a few minor differences with the Senate have been smoothed out, the bill will be sent by the Secretary of State to the various State legislatures, a Presidential signature not being required on a proposed constitutional amendment. The measure must, within a period of seven years, be ratified by three-fourths of the State legislatures. When it is a law, Congress will begin its sessions on January 4 following the November elections, and the President and Vice-President will be inaugurated on January 15 after they are elected. Thus the old days of the stagecoach, of riding to Washington on horseback over almost impassable roads, will become in the national legislature the cherished memory they have long since been in every other walk of life. Senator Norris, who led the lame-duck bill in and out of Congress so often, must be heartily tired of it by now, but it will be a source of satisfaction to him to know that he need lead it no more.

**W**E AGREE WITH MR. HOOVER that it is necessary to bring about "more effective organization of the executive branch of the government." Many of our bureaus could be consolidated; a number of others could be eliminated. Thorough and intelligent reorganization would surely enhance the efficiency and, what is more important, reduce the costs of government. Mr. Hoover's coordination plan may or may not be the most sensible plan yet proposed. In any case we shall not quarrel over the details. But in one extremely important particular we feel that he is more than overreaching himself. Mr. Hoover has recommended that Congress provide for

... authority under proper safeguards to be lodged in the President to effect these transfers and consolidations and authority to redistribute executive groups in the ten executive departments of the government or in the independent establishments, as the President may determine, by executive order, such executive order to lie before the Congress for sixty days during sessions thereof before becoming effective at the end of such period unless the Congress shall request suspension of action.

This proposal is dangerous for more reasons than one. It certainly disregards the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution. It just as certainly increases the power of the Presidency. In recent years the authority of the Chief Executive has been growing tremendously, and in like proportion the power of Congress has been decreasing. That way lies executive dictatorship.

**T**HE CHARGE of Georges Léger, son of J. N. Léger, former Haitian Minister to the United States, before the Senate Finance Committee that our State Department had forced the Republic of Haiti to float an unnecessary foreign loan of \$16,000,000 in order to perpetuate United States control of Haiti is, unfortunately for the good name of our country, wholly true. Following the treaty of 1915 imposed on the helpless Haitians "by military pressure," to

cite the exact words of Admiral Caperton, the United States officer in charge, a protocol was similarly imposed in 1919 to permit American concessionnaires—who had been largely instrumental in securing intervention—to "clean up" on their speculations. Against the unanimous protest of the Haitian people the loan was imposed, National City Bank officials in the United States "negotiating" with National City Bank officials in Haiti. When the signature necessary for the validation of the loan was refused by Sudre Dartiguenave, then President of Haiti, the United States financial adviser, Mr. John A. McIlhenny, withheld—quite illegally of course—the salaries of Haitian officials, to bring them to terms. This course, he testified before a Select Senate Committee, had the approval of his immediate superior in the State Department, Dr. Leo S. Rowe, then Chief of the Latin American Division and for many years the presiding genius of the Pan-American Union. Although the "pressure treaty," even with a dubious legal extension of ten years, was to expire in 1936, the loan extended United States financial control until 1952—the life of the loan.

**S**ECRETARY OF STATE STIMSON has denied the charges made by Mr. Léger. This was, of course, to be expected. Nevertheless, Mr. Stimson's sweeping denial was just that and nothing more. His letter to Reed Smoot, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, contained no convincing or documentary proof of his contention that the charges were false. The letter challenged Léger's competence as a witness; asserted that the American High Commissioner, Brigadier General John H. Russell, could not have prevented the reelection of President Dartiguenave because Russell had nothing to do with the 1922 election; and declared that Russell did not use improper influence over President Borno. It may be true that Léger had no direct connection or direct knowledge of the loan negotiations in question, but this has no bearing whatever on the truth or falsity of the facts he presented. Again, in face of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary it is absurd to suppose that the officials of the American Occupation, of whom General Russell was one, did not use all the power at their command to keep friendly governments in office and unfriendly governments out of office. This has been the whole history of the American Occupation. Lastly, it is of no importance whether Russell did or did not hold a club over Borno's head. With no support from his own people, Borno, who wanted before all else to remain in office, was exceedingly anxious to keep in the good graces of the American officials. He was ever ready to do their bidding. Mr. Stimson has evaded the real issue.

**W**HEN GERMANY in the final months of last year was achieving a record export surplus, it was pointed out by commentators that this surplus was not the result of an increase in exports but of a drastic decline in imports, and hence not to be depended upon. The figures of German foreign trade in January are much more discouraging than these analyses implied. The export surplus has declined by more than 46 per cent compared with December and more than 70 per cent compared with October, and the decline is not caused by a rise of imports to more normal levels, but in spite of a further decline in imports to the lowest figure for any month in the present century. Even our own foreign-



trade figures in January show the lowest figure for exports since 1914 and the lowest for imports since 1915. Dr. Julius Klein himself thinks this "disquieting," and ascribes it to "currency depreciation abroad." If this were the sole influence, however, our imports would have increased to the same extent as our exports fell. But you will never catch Dr. Klein, as a member in good standing of the Administration, mentioning the relentless tariff war in which all the great nations are so unshakably engaged.

**E**AMON DE VALERA, thought by most observers to have definitely passed out of the picture ten years ago when the Irish republicans were outmaneuvered by the moderates and the Irish Free State was formed, has finally risen to power. The Government of William Cosgrave, which had endured for a decade, lost control by a narrow margin in the recent elections. In a way Cosgrave defeated himself. His ruthless attempt to suppress all opposition by means of the constitutional amendment that was jammed through the Dail last fall, which was discussed by Robert Reinhart in *The Nation* of February 24, cost him many moderate votes, for it is clear that the bitter-end republicans are far from being in a majority in the Free State. Even De Valera is no longer a bitter-end. Although when the news of his victory became known, some apprehension was expressed in official circles in England, it is fairly certain that De Valera will not carry out his oft-repeated threat to denounce the 1922 treaty and proclaim a republic. But his group will undoubtedly move to restore the civil liberties that Cosgrave out of his fear of losing office had succeeded in suppressing, and De Valera may be expected to lift the state of martial law under which Southern Ireland has lived for several months. Ironically enough, just as the voters were going to the polls to put De Valera in power, one of the military tribunals set up by the Cosgrave regime was finding the editor and publisher of De Valera's newspaper, the *Irish Press*, guilty of seditious libel. This will give the new President all the more incentive for wiping out the tyrannical laws of the Cosgrave Government.

**R**EVOLUTIONS OCCUR when government ceases to govern. It can hardly be argued that Chicago is on the verge of a revolution, or that, if there should be an outbreak of revolutionary violence in the near future, such an outbreak would greatly affect the rest of the country. Nevertheless, government in Chicago is ceasing to function. The municipality has been unable to collect taxes, largely through its own shortcomings, and thus has no income. Its school teachers and many other employees are unpaid and in need. The State legislature has refused to help. The political boss who rules the city as mayor has decided that many departments of the city must be closed down. If the situation remains unrelieved, it will not be long before the city government stops altogether. But that does not tell the whole story. Chicago has, in addition, more than a half-million unemployed. Relief funds are pitifully inadequate. Unrest is spreading. There have already been numerous demonstrations and disorders. So serious is the situation that the Illinois National Guard has been given emergency training orders, has been told to shoot to kill when called upon to suppress further riots. Chicago's case is by no means isolated or peculiar. The factors that have brought that

city to its present predicament are at work elsewhere. When governments go bankrupt and their people go hungry, there is certain to be trouble.

**T**HE SPIRIT OF KENTUCKY is not to be shaken by publicity. When a group of New York writers, among them Waldo Frank, Edmund Wilson, and Mary Heaton Vorse, took food by the truckload to hungry miners, the Kentucky authorities replied by sending the food out of Pineville, by declaring the miners were not really hungry at all, and by marching the writers out of the State in double-quick time, one of them, indeed, with a bloody head. The Harlan (Kentucky) *Daily Enterprise* rises to the occasion even more gallantly. On its front page it declares:

If Congress wants to investigate anything and is clothed with such authority and powers, let it investigate these sweet-scented geraniums that parade about the country, especially into the industrial centers of States, fomenting trouble, creating discord among laboring people who want to work on behalf of their families, by making their incendiary speeches and thrusts upon God, and deport these canines back to where they belong—Russia—or some kindred place. The *Enterprise* wants to congratulate the citizens of Pineville in EXTERMINATING these so-called meddlers from their midst, just as it surely would have done had these marplots made Harlan County that intended visit, so much heralded by their sympathetic press.

This, as anyone can see, puts the situation in a nutshell. But unfortunately for the peace of mind of the *Enterprise*, these marplots and so-called meddlers seem to be bringing the noble State of Kentucky much unpleasant publicity.

**F**LORENCE KELLEY was a pioneer all her life. Daughter of a Philadelphia Irish Congressman, she grew up with a passion for the under-dog. She started a Social Science Club at Cornell in the late 1870's; her graduating thesis was, characteristically, upon "The Law and the Child"; she was one of the first women students in Switzerland, and there came in contact with every form of European radicalism. For a time she was an ardent Marxist; but she had a sturdy Yankee background that made her want to "do some good" in the here and now. She was with Jane Addams at Hull House in the 1890's, and became the first Chief Inspector of Factories in Illinois. She knew from experience that good laws, backed by public opinion, could be enforced; and she set herself to the threefold task of rousing public opinion, getting the laws on the statute books, and compelling their enforcement. The task required a legal training; she took time off to study law and join the bar. The child-labor, factory-inspection, hours-of-labor, and minimum-wage laws of most of the industrial States of the Union bear the marks of Florence Kelley's brave, fun-loving, persistent struggle. She had the Irish gift to win friends with a quick gesture or a witty word, and to fight to the bitter end when fighting was called for. She saw the reality of the class struggle and was an avowed Socialist for decades; she also believed in the power of bourgeois sentiment in present-day America, and thirty years of the National Consumers' League work was the fruit of her leadership. Much of the "socialism" for which she was attacked in pre-war days is now accepted doctrine, even by big manufacturers, but Florence Kelley went on fighting for new causes to the end.

## "Let Them Starve!" Says the Senate

THE Senate has decided that the unemployed workers and their families must not look to the government in Washington for aid. These unfortunate Americans must get along as best they can, starve if need be, but they must not expect the federal government to feed them and clothe them. That would violate one of the principles upon which our state is founded, one of the principles closest to Mr. Hoover's heart. But do not Mr. Hoover and the Senate know that no government can long survive that deliberately allows millions of its people to go unclothed and unsheltered, hungry and uncared-for? Or is there some magic in the formula of "self-help" that will save the hides of these eminent gentlemen when empty bellies and shivering backs decide to carry to its logical conclusion this oft-repeated advice that Americans should learn to help themselves? Apart from any consideration of their personal or political safety, are these men so hard of heart that they can look with equanimity upon the privation to be seen in every corner of the country?

That there is great and widespread suffering in the United States today cannot possibly be denied. It is in evidence wherever one may look. This evidence, all too briefly, and yet in overwhelming measure, is spread over the pages of the *Congressional Record* itself, where the President and every Senator may read it. Dozens of expert witnesses, social workers, public officials, industrialists, have testified at length before a Senate committee as to the existence of misery and great need throughout the country. The chairman of that committee, Senator La Follette, has presented to the Senate hundreds of statements from municipal authorities saying clearly and frankly that the local communities cannot meet the tremendous need. Yet Senator Fess, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, has the temerity to reply to those Senators who do favor direct relief that the government must not "support the people" because it "is the duty of the people, instead, to support the government."

It was not to be expected of the tory Republicans that they would favor the Costigan-La Follette bill, which would have provided "for cooperation by the federal government with the several States in relieving the hardship and suffering caused by unemployment." Like the Bourbons of old, these reactionary Republicans learn nothing and forget nothing. In every case in history in which the people out of their misery have turned upon the authorities, there has always been a small group of petty conservatives who until the very last have clung desperately to their empty principles. But while the tory Republicans were remaining true to their natural avarice and selfishness, the Democrats were covering themselves with shame. It is not enough to say that many of the Democrats, who only a year ago were bawling lustily for similar government relief for the farmers of the drought-stricken but Democratic South, voted against the Costigan-La Follette bill because they knew that a large portion of the projected \$350,000,000 relief fund would go to the industrial workers of the Republican North. It is not enough to charge the Democrats merely with political

favoritism, for every politician plays that game. The Democrats want to win the next Presidential election. It appears that they are prepared to go to almost any length to achieve that end. They are constantly currying favor with big business and entrenched wealth. They will do nothing to offend Wall Street. And now, because they know that it is what the financial and industrial bosses of the country want, they have turned against direct relief for the jobless. In the words of the Washington correspondent of the *Federated Press*, the Democrats are "buying the next election with the lives of the children of the unemployed."

Mr. Hoover's formula of "self-help" is not only inhumane, and not only downright dangerous to our present political institutions. It is a libel upon our theory of government. Either the organized state has certain duties and responsibilities or it has not. If we agree that it has, then government is not only within its rights, but is morally and legally obligated to extend protection and relief to those of the individual members of the state who are suffering or in distress because of the faulty functioning or the unavoidable misfortunes of society as a whole. A laboring man loses his job; he is willing to work; but because of economic circumstances beyond his control there is no work for him to do. Must he choose, then, between starvation and the occasional and illogical charity of private persons? Does the state, to whose rules and limitations he has submitted by keeping the peace, by paying taxes, and by yielding his body in time of war, owe him nothing whatever when he falls upon evil times? If we contend, as does Senator Fess, that the government has no duties and responsibilities to the people, that the government exists only for its own sake, then we are in effect saying that government is nothing but the private racket of the politicians, of the owners and managers of the dominant political parties. That is precisely what the Senate has said to the unemployed. But let these men take heed of Senator Costigan's warning that if this attitude is adhered to, "the future, never doubt, will pay the price."

"Let them starve!" the Senate has said, to the unuttered applause of the Fesses and the Jim Watsons and the Joe Robinsons. If the unemployed cannot persuade their communities or their State governments to assist them, they need not look to Washington for help. Human decency is less important to the Republicans than their devotion to their "principles." Ordinary human sympathy has far less attraction for the Democrats than has the potential glory—and the profits—of a Presidential victory. One thing Washington should remember is that the depression, at least so far as the unemployed are concerned, is by no means over. The hardships they are undergoing, and the consequences thereof, have a cumulative effect. Again and again will the demand for government relief be pressed, and this demand will increase in volume. A situation that might possibly have been saved by the expenditure of \$350,000,000 at this time, a year from now will conceivably require billions, or may, indeed, be beyond saving. Probably the Democrats will act when and if they come into power in March, 1933. But then it may be too late.



## No War with Japan

IT seems necessary to remind Washington once more that the American people do not want war with Japan. The college professors, amateur diplomats, and munitions-makers who are advocating an economic boycott, or are spreading rumors of secret war preparations, do not speak for the majority of the people. Thus far, to be sure, the government has proceeded with tact and caution in dealing with the Shanghai crisis, and there is every reason to believe that the Administration is sincerely anxious to avoid complications in the Far East that might involve us in armed conflict. But there is no guaranty that this discreet and careful attitude can or will be maintained, and many forces are at work that might quickly compel the United States into a position where war would be unavoidable. One of these factors, and perhaps the most dangerous, is the growing demand for a boycott of Japan, a hostile measure in itself and one likely to lead to war. An unknown factor, but one laden with dynamite, has to do with Japanese aims in China.

We cannot be certain as to the real Japanese objectives on the Asiatic mainland. Japan has for years been bent on keeping China divided and weak, knowing that a united and strong China would probably threaten its national existence. The Chinese revolutionists of two decades ago were aided and comforted by the Japanese militarists, their leaders even finding refuge at various times in the home of Tsuyoshi Inukai, head of the conservative Seiyukai Party, and now Prime Minister of Japan. The infamous Twenty-one Demands and the seizure of Shantung in 1915 were clearly intended to divide China and reduce it to a state of perpetual vassalage. Throughout the civil war from 1922 to 1928 the Japanese were active behind the scenes—though occasionally they came boldly out into the open—in endeavoring to check any tendency toward Chinese unity. More than once they sent troops into Shantung, Manchuria, and other sections to embarrass the victorious Nationalist armies whenever the latter appeared about to bring the whole of China under Nationalist rule.

There is other evidence at hand to suggest that the Japanese are interested in something more in China than the mineral resources of Manchuria. For example, what was the real meaning of the proposal to "internationalize" the five principal commercial cities of China which the Foreign Office in Tokio advanced some weeks ago? This was surely no hopeless shot in the dark, no mere trial balloon. The Japanese mind does not work that way. The Japanese knew that the proposal was certain to be rejected by Washington and London. What, then, was its purpose? Opinion is growing that it was intended to provide an excuse in advance to cover Japanese aggression elsewhere in China. When, let us say, the Japanese are "provoked" into intervening in other sections, they can readily say that they foresaw the necessity for such intervention and had, indeed, warned the Powers to join with them in preventing incidents that would make intervention unavoidable. And we already know how easily provocative acts can occur. We have seen more than enough of this in the last few months at Mukden,

Tientsin, Shanghai, Nanking, Swatow, and in other cities. That the Japanese are prepared for hostile action extending far beyond the Shanghai area is all too evident. Every important Chinese port has more than its normal complement of Japanese war vessels. In Shanghai harbor are concentrated forty of these men-of-war, and in the fight against the Chinese army near Shanghai are three entire divisions of Japanese troops, with more on the way. In other sections of China Japanese military units are gathered awaiting action, the largest concentration, numbering more than 11,000 soldiers, being in the Tientsin area, which from a strategic standpoint controls the province of Shantung and most of North China.

Their pride stung to the quick by the unexpected resistance of the Chinese in the Shanghai sector, the Japanese are now planning to send a large army into China. How far they intend to go in "punishing" the Chinese for their determined defense of the homeland is open to question. Nevertheless, there is already talk of a "national" government being set up in Tokio for the "period of the emergency." This can only mean that the Japanese are planning war on a grand scale, for a national government, which would amount to an open dictatorship, could have no other purpose. Again there is little doubt that the militarists are interpreting the results of the February 20 elections—in which they and their ultra-conservative colleagues won a sweeping victory—as giving them fullest authority to go ahead with whatever plans they may have. A war involving the whole of China is bound to affect the interests of other Powers. Modern wars have a way of dragging supposedly neutral and disinterested nations into conflict. If the Japanese really mean to take over and "neutralize" the important commercial centers of China, they will thereby clash with the American principle of the "Open Door." It is hardly to be supposed that Washington would sit idly by while the Japanese were thus treading upon this sacred principle.

But perhaps greater danger lies closer to home. There are, for example, the many rumors to the effect that the government arsenals, navy yards, and munitions depots are secretly but feverishly preparing our war machine for any eventuality. There are the diplomatic and military "experts," who, having convinced themselves that war with Japan is inevitable, are now urging that we jump into the present conflict and have it over with. Finally, the demand for an economic boycott is spreading. From that quarter comes the most serious threat of all. The boycott is a hostile weapon; it constitutes the use of force against a presumably friendly Power. Such an application of force would be a measure of war. To be effective it would have to be supported by a war psychology, and this can only be whipped up by means of an officially conducted propaganda campaign. The boycott is too explosive a device to be trifled with. Even a private boycott, one not supported by the government, might readily stir up dangerous, uncontrollable hatred of the Japanese. Then it would be too late to remember that it was intended only to force Japan to make peace with China.



## Short Selling Again

**A**CTING under the spur of outside criticism, the New York Stock Exchange has been taking successive steps to limit both the effects and the extent of short selling. It has made public the day-to-day record of short sales. It has adopted the ingenuous ruling which prevents any short sale from being made at a price lower than the preceding sale—a ruling that acts to prevent short selling from exercising any direct depressing effect on the course of prices. But as Congress and public sentiment have apparently been satisfied by neither of these measures, the exchange has now adopted a new ruling that after April 1 no broker may lend stock held for the account of any customer without having obtained that customer's express consent in writing to do so. Up to the present a broker has been permitted to lend stock held on margin without obtaining the separate consent of the customer holding the stock, because that consent has been included in the general agreement signed by the customer when he opens his account. As to the effect of the new ruling, much depends, of course, upon the attitude of the holders of long stock. But the decrease in the volume of lendable stock will at least make the process of short selling more expensive and more hazardous, if not impossible.

For several reasons *The Nation* has little sympathy with the present demand for the abolition of short selling. There is no reason to suppose, to begin with, that the present level of security prices would be any higher than it now is if the institution of short selling did not exist. Short selling apparently accounts for only 5 per cent of the total Stock Exchange transactions. Moreover, every short sale, it cannot be repeated too often, must eventually be completed by a repurchase, and that repurchase acts as much to raise prices as the previous sale did to lower them. If the practice is occasionally harmful, it is also occasionally beneficial. However ineffective it may have proved in 1929, it remains a potential restraining force in boom markets.

The real evil is not short selling, but the overdevelopment of margin speculation itself. In a profit economy, stock speculation within certain limits performs a useful service. A broad and liquid market for securities makes it easier for corporations or bankers to float securities, and hence easier for industry to secure new investment capital. It helps the security-holder himself by providing the means by which he may turn his holdings into cash, often within a few minutes; and the liquidity of his investment enables him to borrow a large percentage of its value if he presents it as collateral. But it is evident that these advantages are being bought at too heavy a social price. It often happens, for example, that the entire capitalization of large companies is turned over scores of times in the course of a year. Cases are on record in which the commissions alone on the turnover of a single security have amounted in the course of one or two years to the total market value of the stock. One of the most effective means of restricting such speculation, as well as helping a needy Treasury, would be a stock-transfer tax on both purchases and sales, designed, like the internal-revenue taxes on tobacco and formerly on liquor, to produce the maximum possible revenue. Such a tax might be determined experimentally by a gradually ascending rate over a series of years.

## The Art of Acting

**W**HEN Mrs. Fiske died on February 15 she was described by her contemporaries as one of the first actresses of her time. It is true that some years ago she played with great success Nora, Tess, and Becky Sharpe, and these three parts rendered convincingly provide a sufficient variety for their creator to claim the highest laurels. But it is equally true that for the last dozen years or so, Mrs. Fiske was merely triumphantly Mrs. Fiske. Many persons were amply satisfied thereby. They greeted the familiar toss of the head and lift of the arm, the crisp turn of speech and biting rush of words with unflagging delight. Here was a personality, sharp and clear, and on the stage as everywhere else in life personality is rare enough to make its ineradicable mark. But whether it is acting is an entirely different question.

Indeed, in the highest sense of the term, we have almost no actors on the American stage today. We have a number of amusing, charming, and intelligent men, and a number, probably greater, of beautiful, delightful, amusing, and even highly affecting women. And in each successive part we see them in they are merely engagingly themselves. The self they act has rarely the edge that Mrs. Fiske's self had, and in that sense she was far superior; but although they appear on the stage with great naturalness, they never present the personality of any character but their own.

We have rather grown to expect this naturalness, and to forget what first-rate acting really is like. Thus when we see an actor who, as the Englishman Charles Laughton this season has done, presents in turn two characters entirely different from each other—the one a broken-down English clerk with a crime on his conscience, the other a volatile French detective, accent and all—our erudite dramatic critics rise almost to a man and salute him as a splendid "character actor." In other words, a limitation, a derogation in contrast to Mr. Soandso, who as Hamlet or Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford is always unmistakably Mr. Soandso, or rather, who could not play Hamlet at all because he is of the Wallingford type and hence is never cast in any other way. To this extent the fault lies with our producers. They see Miss Pauline Lord play with great convincingness the part of a possessed woman, one who is not quite of the earth earthy, and they never think of her except when such a part appears. Miss Lord herself, meanwhile, longs to play comedy parts, without result.

We had an example in the Moscow Art Theater of acting in its highest sense. The company played its repertory, and their clown today was the tragic hero of tomorrow night; or the comedy heroine was in the next play her own grandmother. While this sort of thing was received with considerable popular acclaim, partly because it was the fashion, it is doubtful if the American public would like to see its favorites carry on in that way. When it goes to see Miss Katharine Cornell, it wants to see her with only enough make-up on to make her own features clearly distinguishable; Elizabeth Barrett was frankly an ugly woman; Miss Cornell is far from that. But in the play, Elizabeth must look like Katharine. Never vice versa, if the actress wishes to retain her tremendous popular following.

## Presidential Possibilities

# I. Borah—Now or Never

By WILLIAM C. MURPHY, JR.

THE career of William Edgar Borah has been one long series of brilliant heavy-artillery barrages almost entirely unsupported by infantry. Time after time he has reduced the enemy trenches to a shambles which a few platoons of sturdy foot soldiers could have occupied and held with ease. But somehow the infantry never arrived.

Borah, if he so desires, can force the Republican Party this year to choose between nominating him for the Presidency and inevitable and disastrous defeat next November. Whether or not Borah really elected Hoover in 1928, as many believe, it is quite certain that Borah can defeat Hoover in 1932.

As this is written, it is doubtful if Borah himself knows what he will do. Certainly his most intimate friends do not. Many times in the past it has seemed that he was about to cast aside permanently the shackles of his regular Republicanism, but always heretofore he has contented himself with a three-year parole between elections and a docile return to the party in Presidential years. Why he has done so is one of the many unexplained quirks in his exceedingly interesting and complex character.

The Borah penchant for wetting the soles of his feet in the political Rubicon and then drawing back was first dramatized in 1912. At the Republican convention in Chicago Borah was Roosevelt's right-hand man. Up to the very moment when Roosevelt bolted, Borah was with the Colonel. They were together when a group of Progressives came to escort Roosevelt to the rump convention that made the breach irrevocable.

"We have come to the parting of the ways, Colonel," Borah is reputed to have said. "This far I have gone with you. I can go no farther."

So they parted. What may have been the reason for his decision on that occasion only the Senator himself can say. His friends incline to the belief that he thought the Republican Party should be purged from within rather than shattered by disaffection and attack from without. His critics recall that he was a candidate for reelection to the Senate during the following winter and that the Idaho legislature was Republican—this was before the popular election of Senators.

The suggestion of political cowardice implied in the latter explanation may have served his critics in 1912 but it has never satisfied those who have known Borah intimately in later years. Moreover, assuming that there may have been some element of self-interest in his 1912 decision, that is no explanation of his refusal to support his fellow-Progressive, the late Senator La Follette, when the latter headed the independent Progressive ticket in 1924. In the twelve-year interim Borah had grown to such stature in Idaho that he could have been elected as a candidate of the I. W. W.—or even of Tammany Hall.

But most amazing of all was the heroic crusade Borah staged for Hoover in 1928. In 1912 and 1924 he was passively regular; in 1928 he was militant. Moreover, his militancy took the form of support for a candidate with whom, both before and since, he has disagreed more violently and frequently than he ever did with Taft or Coolidge.

The Borah record of campaign-year regularity and interim insurgency is important in any honest effort to analyze his character and motives. It points to an underlying conservatism all too frequently obscured by the thick incrustation of liberalism which he shows to the general public. Those who fear—or hope—that the election of Borah to the Presidency would mean pulling down the pillars of the Constitution should go back and read the speech he made in the Senate many years ago when other liberals were advocating the recall of the federal judiciary. It was such a speech as John Marshall might have made had the great Federalist Chief Justice possessed Borah's powers of oratory. Also in point is his more recent refusal to support the McNary-Haugen farm-relief bill—backed unanimously by the other Progressives—because he questioned the constitutionality of its equalization-fee provision.

Something of that same reverence which he displays for the Constitution characterizes his attitude toward his own party. He often differs with the Republican organization leaders, largely because he feels the party has fallen into evil hands and he resents what he considers a besmirching of its traditions. Sometimes this reverence leads him into positions that are close to the ridiculous. There was his effort to raise a "conscience fund" to repay Harry F. Sinclair for the Continental Trading Company bonds which the saintly Elder Hays "borrowed" to make up the 1920 Republican deficit.

It is this Republican fundamentalist streak in Borah which leads some of his acquaintances to believe that he did not give active support to Taft in 1912 because he realized it was useless; that he did not bestir himself for Coolidge in 1924 because he realized a Republican victory was assured; and that he campaigned mightily for Hoover in 1928 under the impression that the outcome was in grave doubt. That may not be a very satisfactory explanation but it has the merit that, in retrospect, it squares with the facts.

At all events there must be some explanation for the support he gave Hoover—some explanation considerably more convincing than those then publicly assigned by the Senator. It will be recalled that in October, 1928, Borah swept over the country pleading for the election of Hoover, the Senator's great oratory blinding his audiences to the fact that he was urging them to vote for a man with whom he himself disagreed radically on many fundamental issues—water power, the World Court, farm relief, tariff, to mention a few. Then Borah returned to Washington. There a group of newspapermen who had known him intimately for years had been watching his gyrations with growing amazement. They

\* The first of a series of articles on the leading Presidential candidates. The second will appear in next week's issue.—EDITOR THE NATION.



were interested in such pronunciamientos as he made at Dallas on October 23, 1928, in answer to Smith's barbed observation that Borah was supporting a man he had previously denounced.

"That simply shows," Borah told his Dallas audience, "that Mr. Hoover improves with acquaintance and the longer you know him the more deeply you respect and trust him. That perhaps accounts for the fact that he has been the most thoroughly trusted man by those who know him best, in many respects, of this generation."

In Washington the reporters put Borah on the grill. Paul Y. Anderson of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* was armed with a copy of a speech Borah made in the Senate in January, 1919, when Hoover, who had been war-time Food Administrator, was seeking \$100,000,000 for European relief. Anderson pointed to Borah's accusation that Hoover had permitted packing interests to dictate governmental policy to such an extent that they were practically dealing with themselves. Borah admitted he had made the accusation and added he had no apologies to make. The interview went on as follows:

ANDERSON: Further on in the speech, charging that Hoover had selected his subordinates from among packing-company officials and they had used their official powers to ruin independent packing companies, you said: "No man who has such perverted views of decency ought to be entrusted with unlimited power to deal with \$100,000,000." The context is not entirely clear, and Governor Smith, in his speech at Chicago, asked you to whom you referred when you made that statement?

BORAH: I suppose I referred to Hoover—he was the man who was asking for the power to handle the money.

ANDERSON: Do you think this viewpoint has changed sufficiently since 1919 to warrant you in intrusting the office of President to him?

BORAH: Well, let's be frank. How many men can stand to have the test of absolute consistency applied to their words over a period of nine years? Men and newspapers who were praising Hoover in 1919 are attacking him now, and many of those who were attacking him in 1919 are supporting him now—including myself. Men's opinions change. Few of us can stand to have a rigid test of consistency applied to our words over so long a period.

So much for Borah's own explanation of the Borah of 1928. What is more important is the Borah of 1932, after three years of openly confessed disillusionment. For three years the Senator has disagreed with Mr. Hoover on every one of the issues of the 1928 campaign, including prohibition enforcement. There have been even more vigorous divergences on some of the issues which arose later—such as relief for the millions of unemployed who have supplanted those happy denizens of a dream world where poorhouses were abolished, where there were two cars in every garage, a chicken in every pot, and an overwhelming abundance of sanitary plumbing.

The question now to be considered is this: Realizing that he can prevent the reelection of Mr. Hoover, is Senator Borah willing to exercise his veto power, knowing as he does that to do so may carry him into an open break with his party? Stated baldly, that is the problem with which the Senator from Idaho is wrestling. He knows, as does nearly everyone else, that his power rests on the implied threat that he will bolt if he does not have his way. But he has come

close to bolting so frequently in the past, and then refrained, that he must realize the Old Guard leaders may believe he is bluffing this time. Once he can convince them he is not bluffing, he is in command of the situation. But first he must convince himself.

Borah realizes, of course, that a permanent realignment of parties, both parties, is long overdue. He has a theory, however, that new parties partake of the nature of the celebrated Topsy, that they are not born or formed but just grow. As Borah expresses it, they must grow "from the grass roots." So far he has shown no great interest in the suggestion that perhaps the sentiment out of which a new party could be formed is already in existence and only awaiting some real leader to transform it into action.

This year, in all human probability, offers Borah his last chance for the Presidency. He will be sixty-seven years old in June. In 1936 he will be seventy-one, and with the tradition of picking candidates with a reasonable expectancy of eight vigorous years in the White House if elected, no major party would consider a man who would be eighty years old at the end of that period. In addition, 1932 is the ideal time for Borah to break loose if he ever intends to do so. He need not risk sacrificing his seat in the Senate, for his present term runs until March 4, 1937. The signs of political revolt against the long-dominant conservative wing of the Republican Party are more manifest than they have been since 1912—fundamentally the revolt is more acute today because it does not depend so much upon the personality of one man. In the Republican Progressive group Borah has the nucleus of an excellent campaign organization. His fellow-Progressives are willing to back him with their voices and influence, and there is reason to believe that sufficient financial support is in sight if he chooses to run.

It would be a gay and diverting campaign should Borah throw his hat into the ring. By all odds he is the champion page-one Senator of his times. No other man in public life approaches him in ability to capture newspaper headlines. He proved that recently during the famous Hoover-Laval conferences when he "stole the show" from the President of the United States and the French Premier. Borah, by request, received the visiting French correspondents and told them that he favored cancelation of all reparations and inter-governmental war debts, that there must be a revision of the Versailles treaty "either by peace or by force," and that he was opposed to the cherished French dream of a security or consultative treaty in return for reduction of armaments. Laval, piqued by this unscheduled interruption, made a sneering remark to the effect that Borah represented no one but himself, and within a few hours the Borah interview had become an international incident. Next morning Laval sent diplomatic emissaries to smooth things over with Borah, and that night the Premier and the Senator hobnobbed over coffee cups at Secretary Stimson's home and the incident blew over. The point is that Borah crowded both Hoover and Laval into subordinate positions on the front pages.

Incidentally, the Borah view that the United States should "pull out of Europe" until Europe sets its own house in order by cleaning up the war-time debris of continuing injustices and impediments is one that has considerable popular appeal just now. Paradoxically, in view of his liberal reputation, Borah may be the beneficiary of the current wave of ultra-nationalism, one of the important by-



products of the economic depression. For all his advocacy of such things as recognition of Soviet Russia and cancellation of debts and reparations, Borah is an intense nationalist. That is the basis of his irreconcilable stand against the League of Nations and the World Court. In recent years he has shown a more liberal attitude toward world economic problems, but he draws a sharp distinction between economic and political internationalism. The one he regards as more or less inevitable under modern conditions; the other, he is convinced, can and must be avoided.

Perhaps the most glaring incongruity in Borah's public performance has been his attitude toward prohibition. In 1928 his principal assigned reason for supporting Hoover was that enforcement was the paramount issue of the campaign. The Senator said repeatedly he had assurances there would be drastic improvement in enforcement if Hoover were elected. Borah took the position that the campaign was a kind of holy war to preserve the sanctity of the dry law. To those who know him well, however, Borah as a prohibition crusader is as bizarre as Bishop Cannon would be proclaiming papal infallibility. The role simply does not fit him, abstemious though he may be in his personal habits. The concept of prohibition does not harmonize with the political philosophy which he exemplifies in so many other

fields. Nor has he the excuse which serves so many of his colleagues who assert they must mirror the sentiment of their constituents. Assuming that Idaho is really dry, which is doubtful, it is certainly not dry enough to defeat Borah if he should take an anti-prohibition stand. He is not under the domination of the Anti-Saloon League and kindred groups; he regards them as clerical racketeers and has no hesitancy about saying so.

It is perhaps significant that in all his discussions of prohibition he emphasizes the importance of enforcing a constitutional provision rather than any alleged merits of the law itself. Always he gives the impression that he would be far more comfortable, mentally, if he were advocating repeal or—if that were chronologically possible—opposing adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment.

Whatever happens politically during the next few months, Borah should not and will not be ignored. This year, as quadrennially for the past two decades, he appears again as a great black cloud from the West, causing timid Old Guard Republicans to think of cyclone cellars, while their more hardened colleagues console themselves with the recollection that the cloud has threatened frequently before and has never burst yet. But there is a first time in all human events.

## Economic Insecurity in Japan

By JOSEPH BARNES

"RUSSIA," declared Plehve at the end of 1903 when his country was in the throes of depression and reaction, "is on the verge of revolution. The one way to avert it is a small, victorious war." Four months later, Russian soldiers were fighting in Manchuria.

Japanese statesmen have not the blunt frankness of the leaders of imperial Russia, and Japan in the summer of 1931 was far from the verge of revolution. The situation of the country was, however, extremely bad. Agriculture, in which more than half the Japanese people are still engaged, was practically bankrupt, supported only by direct government subsidy. Industry was depressed, and trade was crippled by the fall in world prices, high tariff walls, and the Chinese boycott. The gold standard, perilously achieved in the beginning of 1930, was wavering before a flight from the yen which had already started. A small group of army officers was indignant at heavy cuts in military appropriations which seemed inevitable if the budget was to be saved, and substantial business interests in Japan were openly interested in their plans. On the night of September 18, an alleged explosion on the South Manchuria Railroad line shook loose the wheels of war, and for five months the Japanese public has had something besides the depression to read about in the newspapers.

In Japan the world crisis found an economy in which things were far from serene. A population which has doubled in a little more than sixty years and which grows at present by 900,000 persons a year, settled in a small, rocky land with iron, coal, and arable-land reserves far smaller than those of the world's great industrial nations, presents problems to which only Malthus had an easy

answer. Since 1868, when the Meiji statesmen started the search for some other answer than plague and war, Japan has tried industrialization. That no final answer has yet been found is witnessed by Japan's economic history since the war, and by the intensity of the crisis in which the country now finds itself.

Whether an adverse trade balance is the inevitable result of Japan's poverty in industrial raw materials, or whether it is simply a phase in her young development, is a point on which neither Japanese nor Western economists have been able to agree. From the turn of the century, however, it has been a pressing problem, and its implications dominate the present situation. Huge credit balances, at one time amounting to \$2,000,000,000, were piled up in the war, when Japan found the great markets of Asia defaulted to her and a feverish demand for manufactured goods from countries more directly involved in actual fighting. Except for the war years, however, Japan has had to face a deficit in international payments in all but exceptional years, and the war-time credits were soon exhausted. Through stimulation of shipping and other items of her invisible export, she has covered the trade deficit, but with every year her dependence on the markets of North America and Asia to cover her import of deficit industrial materials has become more and more apparent.

The process of recovery from war-time inflation was delayed in Japan, in part by the earthquake of 1923. Reconstruction after the disaster was financed in large part by government credits, which have never since been wholly liquidated, and which have frozen banking assets within the country to a dangerous degree. In 1927 the situation became

impossible. A moratorium was imperative and thirty-seven banks were forced to default completely. It was not until the end of 1929 that the Minseito Government was in a position to propose removal of the gold embargo, and when in January of 1930 Japan once more resumed the gold standard, the stock-exchange crash in New York and the beginning of the world economic depression had intervened to complicate the task of stabilizing the national economy.

Finance Minister Inouye, who removed the gold embargo, had been subjected to bitter criticism in Japan before his recent assassination because of his "no-loan" policy, the drastic fall in prices, and the general recession in business activity which were the inevitable results of deflation. The coincidence of the general world depression brought further hardships to the Japanese people. Raw-silk exports to the United States, which are the principal item in the 42 per cent of Japanese exports which this country takes, declined in 1930 by 18 per cent in quantity and 47 per cent in value. The price of silk fell to the lowest level in the history of the Yokohama Silk Exchange, and the attempt of the government to peg the price by making special loans against silk in warehouses produced a further catastrophic fall. Trade with China, which ordinarily is second only to trade with the United States, fell in 1930 by more than a quarter, owing to the fall in silver, the political unrest in China, and the gradually strengthening momentum of the boycott.

The manufacturing industries were peculiarly exposed. They involve the purchase of raw materials from abroad—cotton, wool, sugar, iron and steel—the production of finished goods, and their sale again to foreign countries. This process of exchange is open to the widest fluctuations in price, particularly in a time of falling price levels. Largely as a result of this, Japanese industry has been established on a relatively large base of brokerage, which serves to stabilize price movements in normal times. The credit which lubricates this is coordinated neither by a strong central bank nor by an established national tradition, and as a consequence, in times of crisis, any profound disturbance of trade strikes directly at the financial system. Wholesale prices in Tokio showed a steady decline from the beginning of 1930, the Bank of Japan index reaching 120.7 in August, 1931, as compared with 160.1 in January, 1930, and 212.2 in 1925. Banks which had discounted commodity notes could only add them to the real-estate paper which had been frozen by the earthquake.

Heavy industry, which at best in Japan is a relatively uneconomic venture encouraged for national and strategic reasons and supported by large direct subsidies and a high tariff wall, reacted perhaps less quickly to the depression, but no less definitely. No branch of national economy was immune from it. Preliminary figures indicate that the government railways face a deficit for 1931 of over ten million yen. Nature conspired with the New York Stock Exchange in producing in 1930 the largest rice crop in history. Rice was selling for 17 yen a koku (about 5 bushels) while the government was issuing bulletins estimating the minimum production costs on the best land at 21.50 yen a koku. Practically all agricultural products were selling throughout 1931 at less than production costs, and the farmers, over two-thirds of whom in Japan are tenants, were staring bankruptcy in the face. Government finance was equally affected, and the budget, 26.8 per cent of which—or more

than in France, Great Britain, or the United States—was ticketed to military and naval expenditures, faced a certain deficit.

It is small wonder, then, that the military leaders of Japan, whether they provoked the incident of September 18 or not, greeted it with enthusiasm, as a diversion of public interest from the trying situation at home and as the spark of ignition to set the wheels of industry going again. On the long view, and based on the same curious economic principles, they saw and described in public the continental hinterland of Manchuria as the salvation of Japan. The blunt truths that Manchuria can never provide a population outlet for Japan, that her iron reserves are inadequate for her own needs and can be explored only at prices far above the world market, that as a source of other raw materials her future is most uncertain, and that whatever value Manchuria may have for Japan could be secured far more cheaply than through military occupation have found no preacher and no audience in Japan in the last six months. The course of events since September 18, however, has only emphasized their reality.

Two days after General Honjo's forces had filtered into their strategic positions in Manchuria, Great Britain imposed an embargo on gold. Japan's position in the markets of the East as low-cost producer of manufactured goods was lost overnight. The purchasing power of India and Australia was adversely affected through the fall in sterling, and large contracts for Japanese goods and shipping were canceled. Even more serious was the immediate need for gold shipments to cover dollar purchases. The bulk of Japan's foreign credit balances was carried in London, and to avoid taking serious losses on sterling sales, the Yokohama Specie Bank was forced to ship gold, drawing down the domestic reserve, accentuating the tendency toward higher money rates at home, and adding impetus to the flight from the yen which had already begun.

On December 13 President Inukai of the Seiyukai Party formed a new Cabinet, and within twenty-four hours suspended the free movement of gold. This step had been preceded by a regulation of the government-controlled Yokohama Specie Bank, limiting foreign-exchange transactions to those absolutely necessary for commercial purposes, but considerable sums of capital had leaked through such a partial embargo. Japanese newspapers have directly charged leading business interests with speculation on the yen through capital export just before the embargo. The former Finance Minister, before his death, openly accused members of the Seiyukai Party of such speculations.

From a financial point of view, the results of the gold embargo and of the Manchurian expedition which preceded it have been anything but happy. The total gold shipments for 1931 amounted to 421,000,000 yen, more than twice the sum anticipated even after the British embargo. In November the commercial discount rate of the Bank of Japan was raised to 6.57 per cent and the cost of money to Japanese business is well in excess of this figure. At the close of the year it was reported that 193 banks must be merged or discontinue business because of capital requirements before the close of 1932. Finally, the spur to exports which was expected to follow the suspension of the gold standard has failed to materialize. The New York quotation on silk, instead of rising with the fall of the yen, as had been pre-



dicted by the Seiyukai, quietly dropped another 40 cents per pound. The world depression and high tariffs were factors which the inflationists had not considered.

The direct cost of the military operations has been shrouded in secrecy. It has been estimated that the government must borrow 500,000,000 yen in order to weather the current year. With foreign money markets at least temporarily closed, domestic sources will have to be tapped, and if the present situation continues, this will mean the sale of bonds to the Bank of Japan and further inflation. Heavy government borrowings, necessarily at high interest rates, divert capital from industry and business or compel these to pay still higher interest for their working capital. The indirect cost of the Manchurian and Shanghai expeditions cannot be exactly measured and is mounting every day. Its dimensions already indicate the economic sagacity of the military party in Japan.

Japanese trade was hard hit by the fall in sterling, but the Chinese boycott has caused something more resembling paralysis. Whether it is spontaneous or inspired, it has undoubtedly been by far the most effective of the boycotts which China has learned to use against her neighbor. What had been a gradual drop in exports through the first part of 1931 became an almost complete cessation after September 18. In November Japanese official sources reported sales to China of 10,000,000 yen compared to 32,000,000 yen in November, 1930. Of this 10,000,000 yen, over half was to Hongkong and Kwantung, where the boycott is not so operative.

The full effect of the boycott is not confined to export figures. On December 1, 1931, 414,000 tons, or 10 per cent of Japan's total mercantile marine, was reported to have been laid up for three months, and this strikes the Achilles' heel of Japan's invisible exports. The smokestacks of Osaka, home of Japan's textile industry, are still belching smoke, but the warehouses of Kobe, from which cotton shirts are shipped to China and India, are reported to be over-

flowing. The sugar and flour industries in Japan, which depend directly on the China market, are practically at a standstill. In agriculture, the price of rice went up by 20 per cent as a result of the embargo, it is true, but the farmers had already sold their crops, and fertilizer for the coming year, because of falling exchange and a rise in silver, has increased in price by more than 40 per cent.

Japan is a nation where protest is doubly inarticulate. A severe regime of police repression, if it has not uprooted communism, has effectively driven it underground, and the unemployed intelligentsia, among whom radicalism is said to flourish, are at present ineffective social agents. On the other hand, a closely knit tradition unites the country, especially in times of foreign crisis, in seeming unanimity. The labor-union movement, which boasted less than 350,000 members in 1929, has been helpless so far against the powerful financial aggregations which dominate Japanese economy. The feudal relationship between employer and employee and the strong family system which absorbs workers back on to the land in times of depression have combined to keep unemployment figures low. So far, the domestic protest against the military party in Japan has been negligible.

The country faces, however, problems which admit of no such easy solution as that proposed by the Japanese General Staff. National prosperity in Japan depends more directly perhaps than in any other country on international factors, and no student of Japan has failed to see the exploitation of Asiatic markets and raw materials as the basis of a stable economy. To attempt such exploitation by military means is an international characteristic of the military mind. For a certain time, and while the Japanese public remains quiescent, the experiment may not be fatal. Another Russian remark might be pondered to advantage by Japan's leaders. When Plehve had started his "short, victorious war" to avert the threatened revolution, a Russian liberal wrote: "The Japanese will not enter the Kremlin, but the Russians will."

## Democracy at Work

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

*Washington, February 20*

FOR the finest and most popular act of his Administration, President Hoover can thank William Edgar Borah. It was Borah who virtually dragooned him into naming Justice Cardozo to the Supreme Court. Borah persuaded him that in the presence of such a rare opportunity, geographical and religious considerations should be ignored. Borah allayed all his fantastic apprehensions. Borah made him realize that he was not filling an ordinary vacancy, but one created by the retirement of the immortal Holmes. Borah put the fear of God in his heart by intimating what might happen in the Senate if he attempted to drop another Parker into Holmes's shoes. Hoover deserves gratitude for the appointment, although it is weakened by knowledge of the circumstances. It seems incredible, but I am reliably informed that the first three names on Hoover's original list were a man named James, of California, a man named Phillips, of New Mexico, and Associate Justice D. Lawrence

Groner of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. I cannot supply the given names of James and Phillips, never having heard of them before; Justice Groner, of course, lives here, and his name and title occasionally appear in the local newspapers. Among others seriously considered were Senator Walsh of Montana, whose character and ability are above question but who is two years over the age of retirement; and genial Joe Robinson, the Arkansas pugilist and thinker, who lately has been helpful to Hoover in divers ways. Incidentally, the facts behind Cardozo's appointment might provoke reflection among those who while liking and admiring Borah, continually complain of the diluted character of his insurgency. They always know where Norris and La Follette will be found; they can never be certain about Borah. But Republican Presidents suffer even more because of that uncertainty; it was the very factor which enabled Borah to add a profound intellect and a great heart to the bench where they are so vitally needed.



IF Arkansas Joe's Southern blood boiled at being passed over in favor of a Jew, and a New York Jew at that, he gave no sign during the successful stand which the Hapsburg Republicans and the Bourbon Democrats made in the Senate against the La Follette-Costigan proposal to aid the jobless and destitute. Shoulder to shoulder with Reed Smoot, Dave Reed, and Fussy Fess, he battled gallantly to save starving Americans from the humiliation of being fed by their government—and to protect the payers of large income taxes from annoying increases in rates. Black of Alabama, one of the more promising younger men in the Senate, who has struck some resounding blows for good causes, became hysterical over the prospect of a federal relief plan which might feed Negroes as well as whites, and gave an exhibition which brought a blush to the face of Tom Heflin, lurking in the rear of the chamber. The game of the Democratic leaders is perfectly transparent. They aim at an outcome which will enable them during the coming campaign to tell hungry voters that "we did our best for you, but the Republicans had the votes," while in simultaneous whispers they remind the big campaign contributors that it was Democratic action which blocked further surtax increases. Men of the Baruch and Raskob class have convinced them they can win next November if they demonstrate during this session that they are just as safe for big business as the Republicans are. It is such a shabby game, and so deserving of frustration, that in moments of despair I can see myself beating a drum with Bob Lucas in the Hoover parade.

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THAT prospect has elements of nightmare which are not relieved by Bob's latest stunt—his original and stimulating plan to sell Hoover to the public as "a second Lincoln." This ingenious idea, attributed jointly to Lucas and Simeon Fess, was put in practice on the evening of Lincoln's birthday, when a score of orators employing curiously similar phrases likened the problems and characteristics of the "most-maligned President since Lincoln" to those of Lincoln himself. The Quivering Chameleon contributed his own bit by broadcasting over a nation-wide network from the Lincoln study in the White House an address teeming with modest allusions to the striking resemblance between his situation and Lincoln's. By an interesting coincidence this touching performance was staged immediately after the publication in *Collier's Weekly* of an exhaustive article portraying Mr. Hoover as a "maligned" President. You may be edified to learn that proofs of this article were mailed in advance to all Washington newspaper correspondents, and that former employees of Hoover's American Relief Association received letters inquiring how many copies they would require for distribution. The author, Mr. Arthur Train, in addition to being a writer of charm and distinction is also a former prosecuting attorney, but his article seemed somewhat injudicious in spots. Although there was no mention of White House cooperation in its preparation, it disclosed an intimate acquaintance with Hoover's private history, and was profusely illustrated with photographs, including one autographed by King Albert of Belgium, which hangs in the White House. As one reporter to another I salute Mr. Train. In years gone by I have had some tough picture assignments, but I never got one off the wall of the President's den.

IT will be a marvel if the career of the new Reconstruction Finance Corporation does not end with an explosion of scandal. Certainly every precaution has been taken to insure such a conclusion. At the insistence of President Hoover and the new Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Mills, the corporation is not required to disclose, *even to Congress*, the identity of the persons and corporations to which it extends loans, or the amounts loaned. With no example before us, it still should be easy to perceive the danger of empowering a federal board to dispose secretly of \$2,000,000,000 in public funds, especially when the board is headed by a man whose willingness to aid his personal friends with other people's money is so well established as was that of General Dawes in the Lorimer case. But we have an example in the Farm Board—and we have seen the consequences. The pretext given for failing to require reports to Congress aptly illustrates the reasoning of Republicans and Democratic leaders in Washington. Disclosure that a bank or corporation had borrowed from the Finance Corporation might result, they feared, in provoking injurious suspicions concerning the solvency of the borrower. What could cause the corporation to lend public funds to an institution about whose solvency there could be any doubt has not been explained. I should have thought that willingness of the corporation to finance an institution would tend to allay any possible suspicion of its stability. At any rate, the reasoning and the result epitomize the Washington attitude toward handling the public's money—everything to safeguard the private beneficiary and nothing to protect the public. General, who is getting this money?

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IT was reasonable to suppose that the executive officers of the government had exhausted their ingenuity in contriving means for bamboozling the public through the newspapers, but Secretary Stimson has added some new wrinkles. Under his administration of the State Department the news derived from regular press conferences has degenerated more and more into "background stuff"—meaning that it could be printed anonymously, but not as coming from the department. Moreover, the Secretary conceived the neat idea of inviting selected correspondents to his Woodley mansion at various intervals, where, under the inhibitions which honor imposes on guests, they were imbued with further "background"—meaning stuff which the Secretary desired to have published but for which he was unwilling to stand responsible. He has now gone to the extraordinary extreme of proposing that the selective process be applied also to the correspondents who attend the formal press conferences. In other words, he would like to transfer the cozy personal atmosphere of Woodley to the public offices of the State Department, thus making certain that he was surrounded only by men whom he considered friendly to him. I fear the plan is too naive to succeed. "Wrong Horse Harry" has been told that his conferences will be open to any accredited correspondent of a newspaper, or they will cease to exist. If there remains any further doubt about the level of official sanity prevailing here, it should be settled by the knowledge that the War Department is seriously proposing to withdraw army units from the Mexican border posts and to station them nearer Chicago in anticipation of the expected "red uprising"!

# Power and Politics in Seattle

By ROBERT L. HILL

TO the casual eye all appears quiet on the Western front between the Seattle municipal power system and its private competitor, the Puget Sound Power and Light Company. The recall election, which marked the latest outbreak of hostilities, is off the front page and public interest has veered to other matters. But it is merely a between-rounds lull. The municipal organization has given its competitor a solid left hook and is eager to follow up with a knockout, while the Stone and Webster concern is definitely on the defensive and retrenching.

The success of Seattle's City Light Company has caused bad dreams among gentlemen of the power racket for a number of years. They fear, with cause, that defection may spread to the ranks of other major cities and put an end to their lucrative traffic. Tacoma has already established a municipal power monopoly next door to Seattle, and farther down the coast the Los Angeles municipal power company threatens to drive out private competition. These three cities have the lowest power rates in the United States today.

The Seattle system furnishes a concrete example of a highly successful municipal enterprise which has faced bitter competition and constant political intrigue for about twenty-five years. The success of the organization has been due largely to J. D. Ross, who has been its superintendent almost from the beginning. On March 10 last, on the eve of the regular spring election, Ross was suddenly dismissed from the lighting department by Mayor Frank Edwards on vague charges of extravagance and professional incompetence. For nearly two months after the dismissal the City Council refused to confirm a successor to Ross, rejecting one appointee after another and urging the Mayor to retract. When Edwards remained adamant, recall charges were brought by Marion Zioncheck, liberal young attorney, and signatures obtained to force a recall election. Edwards had been twice elected mayor by the largest majorities ever recorded in Seattle for that office. When heads were counted at the recall in July, however, he was returned to the oblivion whence he came by a majority of 13,603 votes.

"It is City Light's victory," commented Superintendent Ross. "The success of the recall serves notice on friends and foes of public ownership that Seattle is definitely committed to protection and progress for its city-owned utility."

The first official act of Robert Harlin, president of the City Council and acting mayor upon Edwards's recall, was to reinstate Ross as head of City Light. The second official act of the new mayor was to request the resignation of every other city department head who had served under Edwards.

Although Ross modestly referred to the recall as a "City Light victory," it is also a great tribute to the man affectionately known as the "father of City Light." Governor Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, Senator Norris, and other men interested in the gyrations of the power octopus followed the local affair closely and showered Ross with congratulations upon his reinstatement to office. Ross was made superintendent of the light department in 1911, and previously had been engineer in charge of design and con-

struction of the Cedar Falls plant, completed in 1904 as the first municipal hydroelectric plant in America. During his recent brief vacation at the behest of Mayor Edwards he served as consulting engineer for the State of New York on the great St. Lawrence hydroelectric development.

Before the city plant was started in 1902, consumers paid 20 cents per kilowatt hour for current. When it became certain that a municipal plant was to be built, the private companies reduced rates to 12 cents per kilowatt hour. In 1905 the city began taking contracts for residence service at rates varying from a maximum of 8½ cents for the first 20 kilowatt hours to a minimum of 4½ cents for all over 60 kilowatt hours. Some weeks later the private corporations came down to 10 cents for the first 20 kilowatt hours and a minimum of 5 cents for all over 60 kilowatt hours, with a 10 per cent discount for prompt payment.

Rates have been reduced upon many occasions since that time, but every reduction has been made first by the municipal system and then by its competitor. Dump power for commercial use now runs to as low as 3.42 mills per kilowatt hour. Effective since June, 1923, residence rates have been: 5½ cents for the first 40 kilowatt hours; 2 cents for the next 200 kilowatt hours; 1 cent for all over 240 kilowatt hours.

The annual statistical number of the *Electrical World*, January 4, 1930, shows the average rate for lighting current in the United States as 5.96 cents per kilowatt hour in 1929. The average lighting rate for the Seattle municipal plant for the same year was 2.52 cents per kilowatt hour, or 41.4 per cent of the nation's average. In 1929 the average Seattle home used 1,027 kilowatt hours of electricity, about twice the national average, and the city was equipped with 21,389 electric ranges, believed to be the largest number in any city. The total revenue from current in 1929, for both municipal and private plants, was \$8,900,000. The same current sold at the average price throughout the nation would have cost over \$21,000,000, or \$12,100,000 more. This is more than a million dollars above the total city budget, and makes the \$75,000 taxes paid by the private concern in the city seem insignificant. Moreover, not one cent of money from taxation has ever gone into financing of City Light. It has financed its own way from earnings since the beginning. In 1930 it added plant extensions to the value of \$4,787,929.11, redeemed bonds to the amount of \$1,346,000, and had cash and securities for further bond redemption amounting to \$1,241,735.49.

Conflict between the municipal company and private concerns has occurred in many forms. Much money was spent by the private company at the time of Ross's dismissal to defeat Charter Amendment Number 2, giving City Light control of its own engineering and taking it out of the hands of the city engineering office. The city engineer had spent City Light funds on its projects but was not responsible to the light superintendent. Mayor Edwards actively opposed the measure, while Ross championed it, claiming that much waste and inefficiency were permitted under this system



where the buck could be passed around. Ross pointed out as an example that the engineering office had spent years of time and millions of dollars in building the 389-foot Diablo dam on the Skagit, and at its completion no power house was likely for two more years. Voters passed the amendment the day following Ross's dismissal, and elected three councilmen pledged to support municipal utilities.

A few days later A. W. Leonard, president of Puget Sound Power and Light Company for many years, was removed from his position and became chairman of the board of directors. About a month later Mr. Leonard resigned his chairmanship and the position was abolished. Some suspect it never existed.

Another interesting phase of rivalry was in the form of a Voters' Information League, active chiefly in 1925, 1926, and 1927 in spreading "information" which was distinctly hostile to City Light. One of the directors of this organization was Major W. Chester Morse, whom Mayor Edwards appointed as Ross's successor at the head of City Light. It later came to light that the Puget Sound Power and Light Company, moved by a spirit of altruism no doubt, had been a generous supporter of the Information League. This was revealed by Mrs. Edgar Blair of Seattle when she examined the testimony of Norwood Brockett, public-relations man for Puget Sound Power and Light Company, before the Federal Trade Commission. Mrs. Blair filed her evidence with the State Supreme Court, and Mr. Brockett subsequently was let out from the company.

The municipal lighting department early saw that the logical source of energy was in water power, since millions of horse-power were running to waste annually within transmission distance of Seattle, and one of the most critical struggles came when City Light wrested the tremendous resources of the Skagit River from the Stone and Webster company. Records over a period of twenty-five years show that demands for power in Seattle have doubled in an average time of five years. City engineers investigated every water-power site within 150 miles of Seattle and in 1917 began to negotiate for bids on hydroelectric plants at three favorable sites to meet the increasing demand for power. A few days before time to open bids the light department was informed that the private company had purchased the Hebb site on the White River, the Sunset Falls site on the Skykomish River, and someone was tying up the Lake Cushman site in litigation.

The Skagit River in the Mt. Baker National Forest had long been recognized as the most favorable large development in the Northwest, but had not been considered by City Light because it was held by the private competitor under a temporary permit from the federal government. At the time the city was blocked in attempts to secure other sites, the period allowed the private company to begin construction on the Skagit had elapsed. Superintendent Ross then personally filed on the Skagit in the name of the city of Seattle and sent supporting data to show the city's need of the power to the federal government.

The annual report of City Light for 1929 tells of some of the maneuvering:

Superintendent Ross then laid the facts concerning the Skagit before Mayor Hiram C. Gill. Mayor Gill realized the merits of the great project and its potential value to the city of Seattle and he gave it his unwavering

support. He knew the strong opposition the city would meet and the pressure that would be brought to bear on him. Attempts were made to induce him to resign and he was offered other employment that would have made him a rich man. Feeling that these attempts were intended to keep the city from getting the Skagit site, Mayor Gill refused to resign and helped to carry the fight through its greatest crisis.

Mr. Ross went directly to Washington and presented the city's claim to David F. Houston, Secretary of Agriculture, who had jurisdiction over forest reserves. At the hearing Stone and Webster representatives protested against the transfer of the Skagit site, claiming the company had spent a great deal of time and money in development work. Mr. Ross showed that by the purchase of other power sites in the attempt to block the city of Seattle, Stone and Webster had indicated their intention to develop power elsewhere, and since no actual construction work had been done on the Skagit and the company was behind in its payments to the federal government under the Water Power Act, the Skagit was officially taken from Stone and Webster and turned over to the city. Announcement of the decision was received Christmas day, 1918—a Christmas present to the city of Seattle.

When developed to capacity the Skagit River will deliver to Seattle 1,120,000 horse-power, which is equal to the amount New York State will receive as its share from the St. Lawrence project and is considerably more than will be developed at Boulder Dam on the Colorado. Power development will be confined to the upper third of the short river, water being used three times over as it drops 1,200 feet in the first few miles of its course.

The ultimate development of 1,120,000 horse-power is estimated to cost \$74,500,000, with transmission lines, or \$66.65 per horse-power delivered in Seattle. This will be the cheapest unit cost of any large hydroelectric development in America and is one very good reason why a private concern should fear municipal competition. The city already has approximately \$50,000,000 invested in distribution system, steam plant, and hydroelectric development. In 1929 there were \$198.30 in bonds outstanding against the system per horse-power capacity, while the private concern had \$379.32 outstanding in stocks and bonds per horse-power capacity. Seattle's connection with the municipal power monopoly of the city of Tacoma makes this the largest publicly owned super-power system in the United States today.

J. D. Ross has urged condemnation of the holdings of the private power company for a number of years. He points out that not only would this remove a source of constant political intrigue, but that it would materially lower power costs. It costs as much to distribute power as to generate it. At the present time consumers are paying for two distribution systems where one would suffice. The private company covers practically the same ground in reaching its 30,000 city customers as the municipal concern covers in reaching its 95,000 customers.

Mr. Ross now holds the upper hand in Seattle politics. He is securely intrenched and it seems probable that the near future will see Seattle follow the example of Tacoma in establishing a municipal power monopoly—and the lowest power rates in the United States.



# Germany Seeks a President

By JOHN ELLIOTT

*Berlin, January 31*

THE failure of Chancellor Brüning's effort to obtain the parliamentary prolongation of President Hindenburg's term of office by agreement with the "National Opposition" was certainly not without its humorous aspects. It was astonishing to see Hitler and Hugenberg posing as shocked defenders of an outraged republican constitution and insisting with the fervor of true democrats on the election of the President by direct vote of the people. It was no less amazing to behold Socialists and Catholics showing more zeal for the retention at the head of the state of a Protestant military hero than the Nationalists who had put him in office seven years ago. And, lastly, Brüning's appeal to Adolf Hitler was itself a rather bewildering gesture to the general public. Only a short time previously the Chancellor had excommunicated the National Socialist leader—bell, book, and candle—in a powerful speech in which the head of the government cast strong doubts on the legality of the Nazi movement. Yet here was Brüning now inviting Hitler to come around and discuss how Hindenburg might best be retained in the service of their common country over a social cup of tea.

But the man who was at the bottom of the somewhat mysterious affair was not Brüning but General Wilhelm Groener. This gentleman, who combines the Ministry of Defense with that of the Interior, is sometimes mentioned as the possible chancellor in a future cabinet in which both Hitler and Hugenberg will be represented, but I think there can be no doubt of his loyalty to the republic. Groener represents the highest type of German army officer of the old regime, with all his virtues and failings. He would doubtless serve faithfully in Hitler's Third Reich, if it ever came into being by legal methods, just as he was a dutiful soldier under Kaiser Wilhelm, but it is almost impossible to conceive of a man of his caliber lending himself in any way to subterranean plots or conspiracies to overthrow the existing regime.

Groener views life from the simple standpoint of a soldier. During the war he acquired for a time the opprobrious title of the "Cur General," for when the first serious industrial strike broke out in Germany after the commencement of the struggle, he called the strikers "curs." He was equally stern against Hugo Stinnes and other war profiteers. As head of the department for coordinating all able-bodied Germans behind the front into one big army of workers in the interests of the soldiers in the trenches, he drew up a memorandum for the Chancellor, providing for strict limitations on the earnings of the industrialists. Before two weeks had elapsed, Groener had been dismissed from the War Office for this offense and sent to the front.

Groener's conceptions of the duties of a soldier reveal themselves in his precepts to the Kaiser at the German Army Headquarters in the crisis of November, 1918. While Wilhelm was debating what he ought to do, Groener proposed that His Majesty should go into the trenches and die sword in hand. When the Kaiser, however, proposed lead-

ing the army back home to put down the Socialist rebels by force, Groener stoutly resisted and told the Emperor that the army would go home quietly under its commander, but would no longer follow the Kaiser, "because it has lost confidence in Your Majesty!" Groener's words are said to have convinced the Kaiser of the necessity of fleeing to Holland. German monarchists have never forgiven the general this speech, holding him primarily responsible for the downfall of the Hohenzollern dynasty.

But there is nothing in the previous record of this offspring of a simple Württemberg bourgeois family who had made his way to the top of his profession solely by his abilities as an organizer to show that he entertained republican notions. However, when the republic became inevitable, Groener accepted it just as Hindenburg did. And Groener shared with the Field Marshal the arduous task of leading the defeated German army back home and seeing that it was peacefully demobilized. In the days that followed the Armistice, Groener was extremely helpful to Friedrich Ebert and the Provisional Republican Government as chief military adviser. It was Groener's common-sense counsel that persuaded the German civilian rulers at Weimar in June, 1919, of the uselessness of further resistance and the necessity of submitting to the peace treaty.

Groener's appointment as Reichswehr Minister in February, 1928, was hailed with joy by the Republican press, which saw in him a democrat who could be counted upon to make the small army a reliable instrument in the service of the republic. In this respect the Republicans have had no cause for complaint.

Groener's policy has been to "keep the Reichswehr out of politics." One of the first things that the new Minister did was to forbid German army officers membership in the notoriously royalist Kiel Yacht Club. The trial of the three young lieutenants at Leipzig in the autumn of 1930, in the course of which Hitler delivered his famous "head-rolling" speech, showed that the civilian head of the army was determined to tolerate no Nazi cells within the Reichswehr. Last November Groener delivered a radio speech in which he expressed the wish that he could pour his "unshakable faith in Germany's future" into the souls of all Germans. "The firm ground on which this optimism rests," continued the Minister, "must be the German Republic." This is a rather notable confession of faith to make at a time when most German politicians are avoiding using the word "republic" with the instinctive aversion of an American aspirant for public office to discussing prohibition.

Groener is the foremost protagonist of Germany's demand for equality in armaments with other Powers. He is always vociferous in Parliament, on the platform, in newspaper articles and interviews, and through the microphone in his denunciation of French militarism. But nobody is so insistent as he is on the necessity of Germany's arming up to the very limit permitted her by the Treaty of Versailles. He is the author of the "pocket-battleship" program, and his skill in piloting it through the Reichstag in the teeth of po-

litical opposition and financial difficulties might make even Tirpitz envious.

An amazing example of his pertinacity was given in 1928. The Social Democrats had just won a notable parliamentary success in the Reichstag elections in May that year on the issue of "food for children instead of armored cruisers." They had increased their parliamentary representation from 131 deputies to 153, which was considered a very respectable gain until the elections of 1930 upset all previous standards of value. A new Cabinet was formed, headed by the Socialist Müller and containing three other members of the victorious party. The general belief was that the pocket-battleship issue was as dead as Free Silver after the Bryan defeat of 1896. To the general astonishment, however, one of the first things that this supposedly Socialist-dominated Cabinet did was to indorse an initial appropriation for the first pocket battleship.

A secret memorandum circulated by the Reichswehr Minister among his colleagues, which was later published in the *English Review of Reviews*, partly explained how he turned the trick. Groener raised the familiar bogey of Poland falling upon East Prussia and Upper Silesia and grabbing them as she had seized Vilna. This menace was apparently enough to change the view of the Socialist ministers, although to a layman it was not clear why the existing German navy was not sufficient to protect German coasts in view of the fact that the Poles had only a few gunboats in the Baltic, or how even a pocket battleship could insure the safety of landgirt Silesia. Perhaps the threat of Groener to resign if his appropriation was not carried, coupled with the prospect of unpleasant repercussions from a source "higher up," carried more weight in converting the former advocates of "food for children."

Last year the Reichswehr Minister pushed through the Reichstag the initial estimates for the second pocket battleship. Moreover, he has maintained the appropriations for his department practically intact at a level of approximately 700,000,000 marks at a time when the budget has been pared to the bone in an effort to make it balance, when the public is being taxed to the breaking-point, and when funds for the unemployed and for social relief have been reduced to a bare minimum. Last summer when German statesmen and bankers, with their country bankrupt, were scurrying from capital to capital in search of a loan to stave off a complete financial breakdown, they haughtily rejected all suggestions for the postponement of construction on the Deutschland. The summer of 1931 witnessed some curious scenes, but surely no spectacle more amazing than that of German statesmen expecting the French Government to finance the construction of their new warship.

Not only is the pocket battleship sacrosanct, but all criticism of the Reichswehr budget appears to be taboo. Even the keen analytical mind of Parker Gilbert was perplexed when confronted with the labyrinthine obscurities of the German military estimates. Nothing can be more stupid than the course of the German Government, by repressing criticism at home, in giving color to the accusations of French politicians and generals that the Reichswehr is secretly arming far above treaty limits. Yet when the sentencing of Carl von Ossietzky, the brilliant editor of *Die Weltbühne*, to eighteen months in prison for so-called "betrayal of military secrets" unleashed a storm of protest throughout the

world, General Groener replied by threatening to decree still more stringent laws against his critics.

No Cabinet Minister enjoys the confidence of President Hindenburg to quite the same extent that Groener does. The attention of the German Field Marshal was first attracted to the Württemberger by the brilliant way in which the latter handled the transport movements of the German mobilization in 1914. Consequently, when Ludendorff threw up the sponge in the autumn of 1918, it was to Groener that Hindenburg turned to fill the vacant post of Quartermaster General. Again, ten years later, it was Hindenburg who inspired Groener's appointment as Reichswehr Minister when Otto Gessler retired after seven years in this office.

Scorning politicians and their ways, it was but natural that Groener should take the lead in the movement for Hindenburg's reelection by non-partisan methods. Negotiations to this end were apparently inaugurated last autumn when Hitler was received first at the Ministry of Defense and later was granted an audience with President Hindenburg. When the way seemed clear, Hitler was summoned from Munich by telegraph by the Reichswehr Minister to meet him and the Chancellor in Berlin. But Groener had forgotten one man and the oversight ruined his plans. That man was Alfred Hugenberg, owner of the largest chain of newspapers in the country and boss of the Nationalist Party.

Hitler seems to have been greatly flattered by the Chancellor's invitation. The man who engineered the famous Ludendorff putsch in Munich in 1923 now craves for recognition of his "legality" with the ardor with which a demimonde married into "good society" seeks respectability. Brüning's call gave Hitler for the first time public recognition that he was a power in the state to be reckoned with. Softened by feelings of gratitude, Hitler momentarily was inclined to comply with the Chancellor's wishes for a parliamentary extension of Hindenburg's term of office.

But if Hitler was exalted, Hugenberg was insulted by Brüning's action. Long before, Hugenberg had cherished for Brüning a virulent hatred. Hugenberg has never forgiven Brüning for his attempt to destroy the Nationalist Party in 1930. Brüning in those now almost forgotten days tried to form a conservative government by driving a wedge between the milder members of the Nationalist Party and the diehards under Hugenberg. Brüning brought moderates like Gottfried Treviranus and Martin Schiele, the agricultural leader, into his Cabinet and actually did succeed in splitting the Nationalist parliamentary party into two factions—one led by Count Westarp, an old-fashioned conservative, and the other by the Hugenberg machine. Brüning plunged into the Reichstag elections of September, 1930, to complete the process.

What happened, of course, is familiar history. Brüning administered a crushing blow to the once proud Nationalist Party; the beneficiary was not the Chancellor but Hitler. While the National Socialist Party rose from the contemptible status of a tiny group of a dozen Reichstag deputies to the position of the second largest party with 107 members, the Nationalists, heirs of the historic Conservative Party, dwindled into a parliamentary group of minor importance. Once it boasted 110 Reichstag deputies, but now it can claim but 44. A vindictive man like Hugenberg could not be expected to forgive the Chancellor that stroke.

The bitterness of the "German Northcliffe" toward



Brüning was accentuated by the fact that the Chancellor addressed his invitation exclusively to Hitler, and only subsequently was the Nationalist leader called into the discussions. Hugenberg from the outset was firm in his refusal to consider the proposal and forced Hitler to join in the rejection. For in the race for extremism the Nazis cannot afford to be outstripped by the Nationalists. Hitler's lieutenants in all parts of the Reich telegraphed to their leader warning him of the grave consequences that yielding to the Chancellor's blandishments would entail on the party fortunes. The episode throws instructive light on Hitler's pretensions to be a dictator in the Mussolini style.

"Get rid of Brüning"—that is now the slogan of the Harzburg coalition. Brüning, in the eyes of this reactionary alliance, is the last defender of the republic and the parliamentary democracy—that "system" against which Hitler and Hugenberg deliver their daily philippics. So long as Hindenburg continues to be associated in the public mind with

Brüning and hence to stand as a symbol of the existing order, the Nationalists threaten that they will oppose his reelection.

Perhaps, however, for once even the Nazis have gone too far in their demagogy. Whether it be with the simplicity of a child or with Jesuitical cunning, as his opponents charge, Brüning has maneuvered his political foes into an awkward situation. He has put them in the position of placing party considerations before country. Even from the viewpoint of party politics, the position of the parties of the right is anything but a happy one. To oppose Hindenburg's reelection means affronting thousands of Nationalist voters to whom the old Field Marshal is still a demi-god. The demand of the Steel Helmet, itself a constituent part of the Harzburg front, for Hindenburg's reelection shows this only too clearly. But by their public attitude on the issue, Hitler and Hugenberg have made a further stay of Hindenburg in the Wilhelmstrasse the equivalent of a vote of confidence for their arch-foe Brüning.

## Is There Hope for Disarmament?

By M. FARMER MURPHY

*Geneva, February 11*

**O**PENING as it did in the shadow of the shameful failure of the League of Nations Council in the case of Japan's war against China, the pretensions of the Conference for the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments were calculated to make the cynical sneer. To be setting out to frame another treaty designed to check the savage instincts of man in company with the representatives of a nation which within a few months had deliberately violated three most solemn international agreements recently signed seemed to be an absurdity which approached the ludicrous. As Emile Vandervelde, president of the Labor and Socialist International, said in his prepared speech, which he was asked not to repeat in the conference hall, how could much be expected from an assembly in which sat "governments whose will to power refused to make substantial concessions" and others who were responsible for the raging of violence "in flagrant violation of treaties" and who were enforcing "the right of the strongest by fire and sword"?

It was, indeed, not an auspicious augury and the conference at first did nothing to encourage belief in its sincerity. Not only was M. Vandervelde asked to omit his reference to the events in the Orient out of consideration for Japan, but in the vote for fourteen vice-presidents forty-seven out of fifty-four nations gave their ballots to the country which was carrying on a war of aggression. But subsequent developments showed that the incongruous situation might work out for good. Many of the delegates were made very uneasy by it, and speech after speech referred to the war in the East as something which rendered decisive action by the conference all the more imperative. There is already discernible among a majority of the delegates a feeling of their momentous responsibility, and this might not have been so quickly or so fully produced had it not been for Japan's lawlessness coming on top of the world economic crisis.

The creeping paralysis which came over the League of Nations Council in its dealings with the Manchurian and

Shanghai situation also served another useful purpose. It knocked the carefully prepared and adroitly presented French plan clear off its polished pedestal. The fragments which remained were then pulverized by Litvinov so that now nothing is left of it but dust to throw in the eyes of the French voters. It can only be guessed, of course, whether the French plan was intended to be a monkey-wrench to hurl into the machinery of the conference or an instrument for use in domestic politics, but if it was aimed at the conference it has missed. The whole structure of the French scheme was built up around the League, and with public confidence in the League destroyed by its conspicuous failure in the current emergency, the French plan falls with it. If the League cannot even rise to the point of showing moral courage or exercising economic pressure, who is going to trust it with the direction of a military force? If it cannot even array itself in words on the side of right, who will depend upon it to use military pressure, as Signor Grandi said, "in the service of justice"? These are questions which would riddle the French plan if it should ever be seriously pushed.

In view of the everlasting boast about "French logic," it is strange that French policy is so shortsighted. France is always exalting the League, invoking its various powers, and urging it as the proper instrument in international settlements. Yet most of the failures of the League, most of its disappointments, have been the result of secret French intrigue. If France sincerely believes in the League, the only way to strengthen it is to have it deserve public confidence. It will never have that so long as French machinations continually seek to twist its operations (and too often succeed in it) into the promotion of particular national interests, into the service of greedy enterprises, and into the vindictive perpetuation of injustices. French politicians are forever shouting about "security," but if they were as intelligent as they profess to be they would know that fairness, magnanimity, and neighborliness are a better protection than the greatest army that could be raised. In the World War

France had the sympathy and support of the impartial world and it saved her from becoming a vassal to imperialist Germany. But by her course since the close of the war, which has been a negation of the qualities of fairness, magnanimity, and neighborliness and an assumption of Hohenzollern militarism, she has lost that sympathy and now stands friendless between her huge army and her mountain of gold. What the world needs is not security for France but security from France, from her insolent militarism, from her black-mailing diplomacy, from her provincialism, from her malicious meddling in international relations. If the scotching of the first dramatic move made by France at this conference means that her influence will not predominate, it gives the best possible promise for creditable results to come.

It is a deplorable commentary on the present state of democratic nations that the best presentations of the case for disarmament have been made by the representatives of countries governed by dictators. Signor Grandi, for Italy, swept away the whole mass of formulas and petty technicalities which were cluttering up the scene and put the proposition on the broad basis of justice and fair-dealing. In substance and form and in the moving quality of oratory his speech was superb. It contrasted vividly with the hard metallic whine of Tardieu. Litvinov, for the Soviet dictatorship, was no less effective in a different style. With unexpected moderation of tone and language he dissected the various plans of playing at disarmament and calmly but pitilessly exposed the hypocrisies of the different governments.

In discussing the French plan he adopted the most effective method possible by making it appear ridiculous. He showed that the proposed League of Nation's military force would not be able even to assure victory to the side to whose support it went. And how to determine who the aggressor was? And if the aggressor could not be definitely labeled, would the League of Nation's force stand in the middle and fire at both sides? How could Russia be expected to contribute to an international force to aid or work with nations which were so hostile they would not even recognize her? It was devastating. He could not help but recall that the Soviet delegation to the preparatory conference had proposed total disarmament as the only real remedy, and that if it had been adopted the war in China (not yet "certified as war by any notary public") would have been impossible. But still the Soviet delegation was not going to take the attitude of all or nothing and was willing to work with others for the largest measure of disarmament obtainable.

One cannot help wondering if the preeminence of these two governments at this conference has some deep significance. Do the sonorous, desiccated, elocutionary platitudes of Sir John Simon, the routine recommendations of the United States, and the medieval proposals of France mean that democracy is far along in the process of decay? Or that they are only in the act of sloughing off the old dead skin and will appear in a new and brighter coat with the coming generations? The latter may be the case, but the circumstance that the most vital contributions made so far to this conference have been from countries operating under a changed order suggests that it is no coincidence but the writing on the wall.

The sense of great responsibility evinced by most of the delegates is an encouraging omen. There have been other heartening things, like the deposit of petitions containing

8,000,000 names collected by fifteen international women's organizations representing fifty-six countries, the demand of students that they shall not be slaughtered on the threshold of active life, and the promise of the Socialist labor organizations that when next called to war, if they do not actually throw away their arms, they will at least not use them against one another.

The threat to substantial success, given the delegates' sense of their grave duty and the tremendous public support accorded them, lies in the fear that with the best intentions in the world the delegates will not be able to rise above the level of the befuddled statesmen in most of the governments of the world. They are trying to run a modern world according to the rules of forgotten centuries. Can the delegates to the disarmament conference be expected to perform more intelligently than their sponsors?

## In the Driftway

**S**EVENTY-FIVE years ago the steamship Bremen made her first Atlantic crossing in twelve days and ten hours; her namesake, owned by the same company, the North German Lloyd, now grandly traverses the broad ocean in hardly more than a third of that time. The little Bremen was 334 feet long and 42 feet broad; the modern greyhound is three times as long and more than twice as wide. Between the measurements of the two lies much of the history of steamship travel. When the first Bremen was launched, steamship travel was slow, costly, and irregular. The darling of the seas was the proud, wilful, and handsome clipper ship which made the United States of America maritimately famous. The Drifter confesses to an incurable weakness for the clipper; report has it that she shipped a lot of water and was uncomfortable to sail in, but she was fast and when the canvas was fully spread she was in beauty second to no other invention of man.

\* \* \* \* \*

**S**TEAM, however, was stealing up on the clipper. Through the eighteen thirties and forties various steam-driven vessels crossed the Western ocean in fifteen to twenty-five days, all equipped with sails, which whenever possible they made use of. Even the Bremen of 1858 had her sails—three masts of them—with which she saved coal. Coal was the great stumbling-block of the earliest steamships. The new and clumsy engines burned enormous quantities of fuel; the Royal William, one of whose owners was Samuel Cunard of shipowning fame, which crossed the ocean in 1833, burned 330 tons for the trip. Not until five years later did a ship make the passage with a condenser for her boilers; salt water had been used until that time, and the change marked an important milestone in steam navigation. Another milestone was passed in 1840 when Samuel Cunard started the first regular transatlantic service, with four ships—built of wood, incidentally, instead of iron. The North German Lloyd Company, therefore, came along in good enough time, eighteen years later, when most ocean voyages were still being made under sail, but when the new machine, the mechanical sail, was slowly but surely drawing ahead of its ancient and honored rival.



WITH the passing of the sail something touching and lovely has gone from the sea. Yet the Drifter is not able to see one of the great modern liners without a twinge of the heart. It is so confident, so stately, so strong. It divides the waters with such a sure and steady stroke, its black smoke streams away so firmly, its clean decks are so easy to walk upon, its brass is so bright, its beds are so fresh. In crossing the Atlantic Ocean, often unfriendly enough, there is much to be said for a firm planking and a dry blanket, for food not too salty, for a shore not too many days away. The Drifter can be as romantic as anyone at the sight of a four-masted schooner lying idly at anchor in New York harbor, or even passing discreetly along the coast with all sails set and spray flying. But when he thinks of the month-long crossings, the sea-wet clothing, the dank, ill-smelling holds, the ship's biscuit and the leathery beef, the slippery decks washed by hostile waves, he is somewhat unconvinced. He remembers the voyage of Abigail Adams and her children, bravely crossing to France to join the Ambassador; Abigail was gallant to the last, but she hated her little bunk divided by a curtain from the main—and only—cabin; she hated being kept from above decks on every day but the mildest; she hated the inescapable smell. Thirty days of it she had to try her. Recalling that voyage and many like it, the Drifter is perfectly content to walk up a modern gangplank and board a liner that will carry him, with very small chance of failure, across as many waters as he wants to go. He knows he will sleep at night, eat at mealtimes, and walk the decks confidently by day, which at his advanced age is very consoling.

THE DRIFTER

## Correspondence

### Sixty-seven Years of *The Nation*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: May I be permitted to relate a very small bit of personal history and to offer what I think is an important suggestion? I have experienced in my life the extraordinary good fortune of having been a subscriber to *The Nation* most of the time from its beginning until now, and a reader of it all the time. I read its very first issue, and was so delighted with its fine spirit, its splendid forward look, its scholarship, its daring, and the brilliant pen of Mr. Godkin, its editor, that I subscribed at once. Of course that was a small matter, but it led to something else.

I was then a student at the University of Chicago, and I conceived the idea of organizing a *Nation* club. The idea met with favor, and soon we had such a club formed, consisting of upper classmen and members of the faculty. We met every Thursday evening in one of the larger rooms of the university. The purpose of the club was to discuss the last number of *The Nation*, all the members being pledged to read it before coming to the meeting.

Well, we soon became enthusiastic. We had not dreamed that such awakening, mind-provoking, illuminating discussions were possible. Each issue of *The Nation* brought, in condensed and fine form, information concerning the most significant new books. Also each issue brought striking and challenging articles on these and other themes from the ablest pens. To spend an evening each week, with a company of alert and eager minds, thinking about, digging into, criticizing, weighing, trying to form intelligent judgments on such living, vital matters was a new

and amazingly stimulating kind of education. In my long life I have belonged to many clubs; but I have never found one of equal value as a mental stimulus and as a means of keeping posted on the most important events of the world.

Mr. Editor, I venture to write this letter in order to inquire of your readers whether there ought not to be just such clubs all over this land, in every college and university and in every town and city. Ten thousand such clubs would in ten years revolutionize (or, better, evolutionize) the country's public thinking and give us a new America.

Ann Arbor, Mich., February 11 J. T. SUNDERLAND

## Public and Private Ownership

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: When I read in *The Nation* of January 6 Carl F. Kirchner's letter criticizing your circular letter of October 23, I was reminded of another letter written to the *New York Tribune* in 1865 by its correspondent Albert D. Richardson, when he was touring the far West with Schuyler Colfax and others. He wrote, in part:

When the operations of the Wells Fargo [Express] Company were confined to the Pacific Coast and the steamers between San Francisco and New York, it transported 12,300,000 letters annually. Two and a quarter millions of writers paid nine and a half cents extra *not* to have their letters pass through the circumlocution office. What stronger proof of the folly of government's conveying letters? It might with as much propriety sell groceries, convey heavy freights, or deliver washing. Abolish the Post Office Department! Leave this, like other carrying trade, open to private competition, and the mail service of the United States would be performed 50 per cent cheaper and 100 per cent better than it is today.

How strangely like the sixth paragraph of Mr. Kirchner's letter this sounds! Verily, there are always those who rail against anything and everything that sounds like progress.

A few weeks after writing the above-mentioned letter to the *Tribune*, Mr. Richardson wrote the following:

The Union Pacific Railroad, working from Omaha, Nebraska, westward, receives in government bonds \$16,000, \$32,000 or \$48,000 for every mile of road finished—\$16,000 where the route is level and grading light, \$32,000 among the foothills, and \$48,000 in the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevadas. The company also acquires absolutely 13,000 acres of land per mile along its line. In addition it has a donation of nearly a half-million dollars in bonds from San Francisco and thirty acres of valuable land in the city limits from Sacramento.

Private ownership is successful when publicly financed!  
Birmingham, Ala., January 8 ARLIE BARBER

## Not Roman but Romanic

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In the letter of Romain Rolland's on Mahatma Gandhi (February 10) you make Rolland say that the Roman bourgeoisie quivered with rage when he, Gandhi, left. This is, of course, misleading. Rolland meant the Romanic, or French-Swiss, bourgeoisie (*la bourgeoisie romande*). He judges the Swiss bourgeoisie at its true value, for not only French but also German Switzerland has abandoned its old liberal and progressive policies and is pursuing a reactionary and capitalistic course.

Washington, D. C., February 7 DR. A.

## Contributors to This Issue

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JOSEPH BARNES has just returned from a trip to Russia and the Far East.

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## Finance

### Reserve Banks' New Powers

TO the extent that the Glass-Steagall banking bill throws restrictions around the enlarged lending powers of the Federal Reserve banks, to that extent it nullifies the possibility of inflation by fiat upon which many people seem to be reckoning as a cure for depression. The pending legislation does not fling open the doors of the Federal Reserve to any and all banks, but only to those which have exhausted their borrowing powers, or which are willing to band together in groups of at least five for the purpose of applying jointly for loans. In such cases the approval of at least six members of the Federal Reserve Board is required before a loan is granted, and a penalty rate at least one per cent above the current discount rate is to be charged.

It is hard to conceive of a new flood of credit being put into circulation under such conditions, and it should not have been necessary for the Washington authorities to explain so earnestly that no inflation—at least, not much inflation—is contemplated. Yet many in Washington, and elsewhere, still cling to the idea that inflation is a matter of the will, a thing which we can take or leave, according as it suits our purpose. None of the exploiters of the current financial measures has explained how currency is to be issued if people do not demand it from the banks, nor how bank loans are to be expanded if good borrowers do not wish to borrow, nor how commodity prices are to be raised if people will not buy. There is, to be sure, one way to accomplish these ends, which is for the government itself to do the borrowing and spending.

If the government will spend only so much as it takes from the taxpayers' pockets, or announce firm plans for doing so, the rather silly talk about inflating, anti-deflating, "reflating," and the like will be stilled, a substantial basis for public confidence could be established, and a wholesome expansion of bank loans could take place, along with a normal recovery in commodity prices, without a suggestion of inflation. In that case the new bank law would stand revealed in its proper setting as an emergency measure designed, like the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, to buttress the weak spots in the present credit structure.

As to whether the Federal Reserve banks should have, as a matter of course, authority to make loans on long-term securities and other investment collateral, strong differences of opinion exist. Such powers are possessed by the European banks of issue, and if used with discretion are undoubtedly helpful. Good management should be hampered as little as possible by rigid rules and legislative dicta. Before concluding that our banks should follow the European pattern, however, it would be well to inquire carefully whether the pattern is applicable here. Ever since the flood of the world's gold set toward us, as a result of war, we have had a surplus of liquid resources above what could normally be employed in business, with the result that it was employed abnormally in the security markets. Some kink in the distributive process prevented these resources from being fully used in permanent, long-term investments, so that they largely took the form of short-term bank credits. Consequently, our banking machine has been geared to the stock market in a way which is practically unheard of abroad. The doctrine that stock speculation is a national vocation, as much entitled to bank credit as manufacturing and trade, is one that should be reckoned with before discretionary powers are granted to the Federal Reserve banks to lend on securities.

S. PALMER HARMAN

## TOURS TO SOVIET RUSSIA for STUDENTS — TOURISTS SCIENTISTS

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# Books, Drama, Films

## Windherd

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

Rides the wind heavily, forth himself shouting,  
on his own flanks shoot his whips.  
We hear him the moonedge scraping by its rasp,  
or the cloud stonier, clinking hail.  
Herdsmen of sounds, he follows surf  
thunderously grazing.

Now

he effervesces in the trees; he seethes the grass.  
Our windows cough his phlegm. Quick we endear  
Quiet, our house pet, on a sound's tooth dying.  
His horn mouth he on the chimney strikes;  
reaches his quick hand down, and grips  
the flame, by its hunting fingers;  
whereat the coals, in black cat huddle,  
scream from their fire mouths.

Afar we hear

the mob waves panic, crowding and gnashing spume;  
and the sky, metal and cold, splitting with icy rust.

## Clarence Darrow

*The Story of My Life.* By Clarence Darrow. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.50.

MR. DARROW is not a great man. He is a great personality. The distinction is moot. But the difference is vital. He is not a great jurist or philosopher or social statesman. He is shrewd, he is often wise, he is colorful, he is very human, and he has an unerring gift for the middle of the stage. He has lived in the congenial limelight of a dramatic egocentricity; and he has illumined many things around him. And, of course, each melodramatic chapter in his career has a grand story behind it. But unlike Emma Goldman and Lincoln Steffens, who in their vividness and unconscious attraction toward the spotlight resemble him, he refuses to divulge his tales out of school; which is too bad. A great man, a Carlylean hero, can afford to write a bland autobiography if he so chooses. For history will speak for him. But an interesting character, about whom the main thing is not his views or his deeds but his life, does himself an injustice when he writes an official autobiography. And Mr. Darrow has done himself precisely such a disservice. He is a vastly more experienced man than his memoirs indicate. His book reads as though it had been carelessly dictated to a stenographer.

Professionally Mr. Darrow is a lawyer, with a tendency to rescue the under-dog from the predicament of dramatic injustice. Avocationally he has always been interested in atheism and scientific determinism, with especial regard to biology. And both his professional and avocational views he has had the rare good fortune to argue in court.

As a lawyer Mr. Darrow has contributed little to disciplined jurisprudence, to the philosophical clarification of the law, even in labor disputes or in criminal treatment, which were his main interests. Mr. Darrow is a great trial lawyer in criminal cases, a really uncanny bewitcher of juries. And it was as a trial lawyer, rather than as a jurist, that he won and lost in his great labor cases: the Debs case in 1893, the Haywood-Moyer-Pettibone case in 1905-06, and the McNamara case in 1911.

Yet in none of these trials does Mr. Darrow take the reader behind the scenes. And he fails to point out their social significance. After all, the Socialist Party, as we now know it, received its indigenous impetus when Debs embraced it in jail. The I. W. W., and its profound syndicalist influence on our more proletarian sects, had much, almost everything, to do with Haywood's experience in Idaho. And the McNamara shock to American labor literally changed its entire direction, as Louis Adamic has so brilliantly pointed out in "Dynamite." But Mr. Darrow is satisfied with a mere epitome of these celebrated affairs. It is also unfortunate that he fails to bring out the deeply tortured controversies of the McNamara tragedy—controversies which Jim McNamara and Schmidt explained to the present writer, with all the objectivity of men whose hurts have deadened all hope, during two unforgettable hours at San Quentin.

Mr. Darrow's open atheism is extremely attractive. There are, of course, no agnostics. They are merely scared atheists who rationalize their fear. Still, Mr. Darrow constantly harps on an Ingersoll atheism, which is socially antiquated in its irrelevance to the contemporary problem of religion. During the Scopes case he brought out all the village-atheist objections to Holy Writ on the ground of its bad geology, its magic obstetrics, the incredible biochemistry of Lot's wife. He laughed at the sacred cosmogony and the homiletic biology of Mr. Bryan. But what really endangers the civilization of civilized men is not that the poetry of the Bible does not work in the laboratory, but that in our twentieth century, organized religion of any kind, as a social force, is the deadly enemy of the scientific outlook, the humane rationalism, and the Socialist direction without which modern society simply cannot go on. And because Mr. Darrow failed to think through the religious predicament of the modern world, he permitted the Scopes case to point the triumph, not of "science" and evolution, but of modernism in religion—whose influence is obviously more harmful to the life of the mind than the dying rattles in the fundamentalist throat. Toward the end of his book Mr. Darrow apparently realizes this, for he records his discouragement when Messrs. Eddington and Jeans appointed the Lord to a fellowship in pure mathematics at Cambridge.

Mr. Darrow has been a voracious lay reader in biology all his life. But there, again, he is still fighting the battles of Huxley, albeit he naturally dispenses with Huxley's tactical reverence for evolution. On the contrary, he constantly dwells on the vanity which is behind natural selection, and on many occasions he contemplates his own birth as an infinitesimal accident which he deems very absurd and uncalled for. When man is once born, however, Mr. Darrow thinks of him, with Huxley, as a "manikin," wound up and determined, a sort of etiological puppet. In this view we are all psycho-physical parallelograms, in the utter grip of its forces. This leads Mr. Darrow to his favorite theory that no man can help being and doing just as he is and behaves. John Doe was a *fait accompli* from the beginning of time. And it is on this old-fashioned biological determinism that Mr. Darrow rears his very wise and very humane criminology; which again is a pity. For one should be able to subscribe to a decent and enlightened penology without having it rest on a Victorian mechanism.

It is in the Leopold and Loeb case, which is the most famous of the hundreds of criminal cases in which Mr. Darrow did brilliant and just defense, that he especially illustrates his homely materialism. Leopold and Loeb murdered a child for reasons, Mr. Darrow insists, which no man in his finite ignorance could possibly fathom. It seems that in the infinite past a concatenation of circumstances nebularly began which eventuated in a hammer held in the hand of Loeb and landing on the

head of the Frank boy. That is all very well. Yet it would have been extremely illuminating if Mr. Darrow had added that the case was a sex crime. It is far wiser penology not to hang but to treat sex criminals, if possible, than it is to refrain from hanging mere puppets of biochemical "determinism."

So much for the review of Mr. Darrow's autobiography. But I cannot stop here. Mr. Darrow deserves so much better than he receives from his own pen. And to do him justice I must trot out the hoary but abiding line that "nothing human is ever alien" to Clarence Darrow. He really suffers prostitutes quite as gladly as philosophers; indeed, vice versa. He really is no more impressed by the high and mighty and good than he is by the low and lowly and bad; indeed, quite the contrary. All men but the righteous have his sympathy. And if they can't have that, for some practical reason, they at least have his insight. And the reason he understands all manner of men and their sisters is because, like all real human beings, he wishes to conceal quite as much as he is willing to say. Possibly this is why he did not tell the whole story.

And then, the mellowness of his wisdom, at its best, is a joy. Some eight years ago I was asked to invite Mr. Darrow to address a lunch club of journalists in New York City. Mindful of an appreciative article I had written of him in the old *Sunday World*, he kindly accepted and came on from Chicago. He told us what scoundrels we were and how he loved us. I shall never forget the real understanding he showed of the miserable cowardices and the deep decencies, of the trials and triumphs, of all the soft-pedaling and four-flushing and yet all the real courage and honorableness which the Fourth Estate so perversely displays. And it is a great tribute to the man that, when he finished, some of us softly referred to him in an affectionate vulgarity, at once deeply respectful and quite unprintable.

BENJAMIN STOLBERG

## The Kaleidoscope of Russia

*The Price of Life.* By Vladimir Lidin. Translated by Helen C. Matheson. Harper and Brothers. \$2.

IN this novel Lidin, "one of the well-known Russian writers," gives us an extraordinary picture of university life in Soviet Russia. It is the story of Kiril Bessonov, a peasant poet who betrays his ideals for a short cut to wealth. Kiril's tragedy is played against a blaring and chaotic background—Bohemian nights in underground rooms, singing gypsies, bowls of vodka—where greed and lust vie with the ascetic bleakness of bolshevism. It is a vivid story, which is strangely speeded up to keep pace with the creation of a new social order. Involved in robbery and murder, Kiril escapes the police only to decide that life is not worth while if the price to be paid is perpetual flight and fear of betrayal.

This synopsis, taken bodily from the flap of the jacket, gives a fairly correct idea of the plot, except for one very significant, crucial detail. According to the novel, Kiril does not decide that life is not worth while. On the contrary, he surrenders himself to the police because life seems to him distinctly worth while. Indeed, toward the end of the book we read: "Kiril was suffused with a feeling of serene joy at the thought that he was returning to his own world. There he would learn the values of life, of human blood, of toil, and of love, and it would be through his awful ordeal that he would acquire his knowledge. In spite of his sorrow and remorse, his elation still persisted as he looked at the loveliness of the earth with the sea caressing its coast."

One wonders—is this simply an error made by an irresponsible writer of blurbs, or is this deliberate falsification? The sensational jacket, with the girl kneeling in anguish, the

manacled youth staring defiantly into space, and the conspicuously printed legend, "Youth Pitted Against Soviet Tyranny," seems to support the latter hypothesis. It is distressing to think of the terrible shock Lidin will get when he learns of the lurid, misleading, and downright indecent way in which his book has been brought before American readers. It is even more distressing to see an old and reputable publishing firm stoop to the ethics of a calumny monger.

The truth is that the novel has nothing to do with Soviet tyranny or with anybody pitted against that tyranny. It simply depicts a proletarian youth who in the period of the NEP falls under the influence of the then revived unscrupulous, rapacious Soviet bourgeoisie. Torn away from his class, from the lofty and difficult business of creating a new and better society, the youth is lost in the morass of bourgeois individualism. This idea is not new; it is a Soviet cliché. Scores of novels have been written in the Soviet Union with this as the major theme. Indeed, rather than showing youth pitted against Soviet tyranny, the author shows the clash between the good and evil forces in NEP Russia. The whole point of the novel is that the proletariat stands for life, for health, for progress; while the bourgeoisie stands for disease, death, and decay.

Altogether, the reader seeking a correct and intimate picture of Soviet life must be warned against the numerous Russian novels that have of late been flooding the American market. I have in mind such books as Leonov's "Thief," Voinova's "Semi-Precious Stones," Pilnyak's "The Volga Falls to the Caspian Sea," and Kataiev's "Embezzlers." One must constantly bear in mind the rapid and kaleidoscopic changes in Soviet conditions. What was true of Soviet life yesterday is utterly untrue today. The rate of progress is terrific. This has been one of the greatest difficulties the Soviet writers have had to cope with. By the time a novel is completed it is obsolete. Imagine how long it takes for a novel to be written and published in Russia, be transported to America, make the rounds of the American publishers, be translated and be published, and you have some notion of the validity of the picture you get by the time the book reaches you. No wonder most of the Soviet novels published in this country deal with the NEP period, a period that has passed into oblivion, and been superseded by the great period of Socialist construction, by the noble period of the Piatiletka. When you read of "Bohemian nights," "singing gypsies," "bowls of vodka," you read a one-sided depiction of a forgotten era. Lidin's exposé of the dangers of bourgeois influence in a proletarian society is almost devoid of reality in present-day Soviet Russia.

Is Lidin a Bolshevik writer? Of course not. He is what is known as a fellow-traveler, a *right* fellow-traveler. Genuine proletarian and Bolshevik writers were never so dismayed by the danger of bourgeois influence, even during the heyday of the NEP. They had too much confidence in their class, in the vitality of the revolution. With the bourgeois writers the dismay was somewhat insincere, somewhat of a pose. Pretending to lament such influence, they really loved to dwell on it. Their thieves, their saboteurs, their gamblers, embezzlers, and murderers were invariably more colorful and romantic than the virtuous, "bleakly ascetic" Communists. With the introduction of the New Economic Policy it was the bourgeois writers who wept most vociferously over the failure of the beautiful ideals of the revolution, over the triumph of evil, selfish, mean human nature. They enjoyed weeping, and they would not be consoled. In this novel Lidin did not go so far; he was willing to be consoled; he was even willing to console the reader by bringing Kiril back to his proletarian world where "he would learn the values of life, of human blood, of toil, and of love." Whatever his real feeling, one thing is certain—he did not anywhere in the novel pit Soviet youth against Soviet tyranny.

JOSHUA KUNITZ



## Grover Cleveland

*Grover Cleveland, a Man Foursquare.* By Denis Tilden Lynch. Horace Liveright. \$3.50.

THERE is no interpretation, no philosophic domination of material, no sense of significant long-term currents in American destiny, in Denis Tilden Lynch's swirling, overflowing, chromatic, lively, and sometimes inaccurate biography of His Obstinacy, Grover Cleveland. There is simply a fervent testimonial, touching in these days, to an intransigent honesty—the honesty that is implied in the subtitle, "A Man Foursquare." The reason for the lack of interpretation is probably inherent in Cleveland's own personality. For Cleveland stood between two eras, that of the combination of an industrial revolution with the conquest of a frontier which followed the Civil War, and that of a rampant progressivism which attempted too late to stay the course of revolution as it knocked over the barriers of Sherman and Clayton Anti-Trust acts in its drive toward "America, Incorporated." To both industrial leaders and progressives Cleveland's answer was the same: "Honesty is the best policy." He was, successively, a veto mayor, a veto governor, a veto President, and a vetoer of Bryanism. As William Allen White has shrewdly noted in the best character study of Cleveland to date (see "Masks in a Pageant"), the man "brought no new doctrine to the people." He had no theory of government; he left no legislation behind him that is indissolubly associated with his name. It is true that he denounced the "communism of pelf," but it was his Administration that saw the teeth extracted from the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, and Cleveland, with a panic sounding about his ears, could hardly afford to wax angry. He formulated no doctrine of the "new freedom," he left behind him no La Follette speech of '97. What he stood for was a simple, old-fashioned ideal of doing a day's work along the lines set for him by the Constitution and circumstance, without looking very far ahead or very far behind. He embodied the aspiration for a decent capitalism, along laissez faire lines. And that was all he needed to succeed, to become our greatest President between the time of Lincoln and the days of Wilson. For what the ranks of Democracy, and the more Mugwump of the Republican following, wanted in the eighties was simply honesty personified. The country had been too long in the hands of the Blaines, soft-voiced and devious; the Oakes Ames, who could put stock "where it would do the most good"; and the "Pig Iron" Kelleys, with their everlasting prolongation of Civil War tariffs that made so profitable the politics of acquisition and enjoyment.

Cleveland became mayor of Buffalo because no business man had the guts to run for the office in a city that had its miniature Tweed Ring. He became governor with the aid of "Honest" John Kelly, Croker's predecessor as ruler of Tammany, but it didn't take him long to break with his ally. In this matter he was the practical politician, after the manner of his egregious fictional echo, "The Honorable Peter Stirling." He found himself President, in 1885, after a campaign that dripped with muck, beating Blaine by a nose after the Reverend Mr. Burchard's speech about "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion" had driven the Irish from the Republican ranks and thus effectively canceled the stigma of Cleveland's illegitimate son. Once President, he vetoed fraudulent pension bills by the score, denounced swollen tariffs, and went out of office in 1889 with the consolation that he had been too forthright to be popular. In 1892, when the country turned to him again, he found himself with a soft-money panic on his hands. Paying no heed to the Bryan element of his party, he called in the bankers, when Congress failed him, to check the flow of gold from the Treas-

ury. He halted—for a moment—the spread of Manifest Destiny to the Hawaiian Islands; and—the one real blot on his record—he acquiesced in Attorney General Olney's "government by injunction" in smashing the Pullman strike of 1894. At his second inaugural he drained off a potion of fortifying whiskey in full sight of the multitude, which doubtless included a number of prohibitionists.

In short, he knew his own mind, and Mr. Lynch is very much alive to this characteristic. The biography is successful on two counts: it gives us a full account of the mudslinging campaign of 1884 (which Robert McElroy virtually skipped in his official life of Cleveland); and it reproduces the frenzy of party political maneuvering quite rampageously. It also takes a sensible attitude in condemning the government's course in the suppression of Debs. But the virtues of the book—the full and effective treatment of campaigning—lead to a lopsidedness in its proportions. One can gain a far better view of the second Cleveland Administration by reading James A. Barnes's recent biography of Carlisle, Cleveland's Kentucky Secretary of the Treasury. The numerous minor errors of the first edition of Mr. Lynch's book have been corrected for the second edition. The worst of these was the naming of George W. Curtis, the Civil Service reformer, as an assistant to Carlisle, when William E. Curtis was the man in question. A permanent error in the book, it seems to me, is Mr. Lynch's treatment of the Spanish-American War. Walter Millis's "The Martial Spirit" should be read to offset this.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

## Ibsen

*The Life of Ibsen.* By Halvdan Koht. W. W. Norton and Company. Two volumes. \$7.50.

"TEACH me to will more than I can" is Ibsen's ideal as he expressed it in "Brand," while Björnson in "Beyond Our Power" tries to show that the will, if it is to be salutary and helpful, must be kept within the bounds of human ability. Nothing could show more clearly the difference between the genius of Ibsen and the talent of his lifelong rival than this comparison pointedly made by Professor Koht in his Ibsen biography, originally published for the Ibsen centenary (1928) and now translated into English. Of all people in the world Halvdan Koht is best equipped for the work: he is a native of Ibsen's birthplace, Skien; he knew Ibsen personally; Fru Ibsen and Sigurd turned over to him, for editing, the poet's literary remains; he collected and edited Ibsen's letters; as professor of history at Oslo University he knows the Norse background as well as his own pocket; and for four decades he has observed in many cities the greatest actors essay the roles created by Ibsen. In a plain and factual style, without lurid color or flashy quotations, he has written the authoritative biography of the great dramatist, adding heavily to the debt which all students of Ibsen already owe him.

In a recent letter to the present reviewer Professor Koht expressed the regret that he had not been able to revise the text for this translation to include some of the interesting material that the celebration of the centennial had brought to light. One of these items would probably be an article (published in *Edda*, vol. 17, no. 1) which serves to explain at least in part what Professor Koht calls hard to understand—namely, Ibsen's refusal to visit Skien or to write to his parents after 1850. We now know that he did visit there in 1860, shortly after he had married and become a father, to ask his wealthy relatives for aid during some of his very bitterest Christiania years. But the manner in which these good bourgeois refused his request and advised him to leave the theater was such a humiliation to Ibsen that in letters many years later he ignores this visit when

he speaks of Skien, stating that he had not been there since 1850.

It is to be regretted, also, that Professor Koht did not feel that he could write on the life of Ibsen—of all subjects!—without reticences even at this late date. A large part of the book is taken up with a discussion of the personages who served as models for the *dramatis personae*, yet our author is silent, for example, on such an important one as Susannah Ibsen; he omits very striking analogies in Snoilsky's life while discussing him as the model for Rosmer, and he does not mention the name of the prototype of Jørgen Tesman. At times the text reads like what Professor Koht calls the drama of the decades before Ibsen, "small-town idealization."

The translators, Ruth Lima McMahon and Hanna Ostrup Larson, take various liberties with the text; for example, they omit numerous footnotes, and insert for the American reader a none-too-happy comparison of Peer Gynt with George F. Babbitt. They speak of plays "falling through" instead of failing on the stage, and of Sigurd Ibsen's efforts to procure a "teaching chair" at the university. There is room for improvement also in a number of translations of the Ibsen poems. But it is a fine thing that this standard work has been made accessible to American readers, and the American-Scandinavian Foundation is to be commended for making this edition possible.

A. E. ZUCKER

## The Poetic Method of H. D.

*Red Roses for Bronze.* Poems by H. D. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$3.

THAT H. D. is an imagist is, it seems, largely a coincidence. This poet had tried a little free verse without having heard of *vers libre*; she had written a few poems objectifying her emotion in a single image, when along came Ezra Pound in search of disciples for his new school, and named her "*imagiste*." She had, in other words, actually begun to work out her own personal technique in verse at exactly the time that the imagist school was formed. Today the imagist movement is dead; the better poets were glad to let it die, and the poorer poets died with it. H. D., a poet of some individuality, went on writing in her own manner. She was a lover and a student of Greek poetry; she chose therefore to express her own feeling through Greek images, Greek myths. She adapted Greek rhythms to English verse; she wrote balanced quantitative lines based on Greek rhythms. But despite all this, H. D. was not and is not Greek in spirit. She has no classic repose; she is actually a romantic poet. She is not hard and precise; she is emotional, even at times sentimental. What she has actually done is to use an alien ethics, philosophy, aesthetics, world, to express her own very modern inner conflict. This approach might be right for fine poetry were it not for the fact that H. D. cannot identify herself completely with the Greek world from which her images (usually rather obvious ones) are drawn; her psychological reactions are essentially un-Greek. The images which might best express her psychological outlook, those of the modern scene, she rejects. She cannot meet that world and is emotionally a recluse from it. The result is that she must try to use an imagery expressive of repose to interpret a modern psychological confusion. Even this could probably be accomplished if her imagery were subjective and used to interpret the subjective, or if, on the other hand, her imagery, being objective and Greek, were applied to an objective and contrasting modern world to interpret the ironic, subjectively felt difference. But H. D. uses an objective imagery to express subjective chaos, and the two things do not fuse.

In the seventeen or eighteen years of her writing, H. D.

has developed little. Her poetry has changed, but only by elaboration; it has grown more diffuse, more insistently personal. "*Red Roses for Bronze*," her latest book, is a collection of lyrics in this later manner. We still have the Greek world and it is still contrasted extravagantly with the personal subjective chaos. The poems incline to be vague; the emotions are overstressed; the imagery lacks variety. A poet who began by being precise, clear, and limited is now diffuse, dim, and still limited in outlook.

EDA LOU WALTON

## A Revolutionist's Handbook

*Labor Fact Book.* Prepared by the Labor Research Association. International Publishers. \$2.50.

TO "*Labor and Automobiles*," by Robert Dunn, "*Labor and Coal*," by Anna Rochester, "*Labor and Lumber*," by Charlotte Todes, "*Labor and Silk*," by Grace Hutchins, the Labor Research Association now adds the "*Labor Fact Book*." This book was prepared "to meet the need for facts felt by workers, as well as students, writers, speakers, and others eager to know the prevailing conditions." More specifically the book is intended for "the working-class vanguard" of militant organizations engaged in "fighting . . . the increasingly reactionary measures of the capitalist class."

The chapters deal with Imperialism, Finance, Capitalism, Industrial Workers, Farmers, Workers' Organizations and Struggles, the Employers' Offensive, the Soviet Union, Government and Political Parties, and Reformist and Revolutionary Internationals. A mass of well-arranged factual material is included but not to the exclusion of necessary interpretation and description. The statistical material is drawn from governmental and unimpeachable private sources. It is not a pretty picture that it presents. "During the first half of 1930 in New York City alone 72,298 warrants for eviction were issued in the city courts . . ." "In South Carolina . . . the total expenditure per pupil enrolled in 1928 was \$60.25 in the white schools and \$7.65 in the Negro schools." "Street laborers still work sixty hours a week in 351 cities of the United States." Forced sales "numbered 20.8 per 1,000 farms during the year ending March 1, 1930."

Members of the Democratic, Republican, and Socialist parties will take exception to the facts and generalizations presented by the compilers for absorption by American workers. "The Republican Party . . . is the party of American imperialism at its highest point of development," state the authors. This statement is followed by a description of policies of Republican governors and Presidents in connection with the Spanish-American War, Cripple Creek, Mooney and Billings, the 1919 steel strike, the 1921 march in Logan County, West Virginia, Teapot Dome, Sacco and Vanzetti, the Parker appointment, Muscle Shoals, the Fish committee, and the business connections of the present President and his Cabinet. The Democratic Party is described in terms of Jim Crowism, Tammany Hall, Ludlow, Lawrence textile workers, Homestead Steel strikes, the Pullman strike, the A. Mitchell Palmer raids, and the seizure of Haiti in 1915. The Socialist Party is disposed of by the authors in a scant two pages as being "the third party of capitalism," which is "fundamentally bourgeois and imperialist." The party is explained in terms of the marked decrease in membership since the death of Debs, the support given its Presidential candidate by capitalistic newspapers, attitudes on the Negro question as expressed by its candidates for office, and the plea made by Morris Hillquit in 1928 that the Socialists "dissociate [themselves] from the Soviet Government," which "has been the greatest disaster and calamity that has occurred to the Socialist movement."



The book is primarily intended to give to revolutionary leaders verbal ammunition to win support for the doctrines which they profess. But it may also be recommended as a peppy and easily usable compilation to those who like to see themselves in somebody else's mirror and to those who are responsible for the continuance of the conditions out of which the "Labor Fact Book" grew.

WILLIAM L. NUNN

## Books in Brief

*Small Town.* By Bradda Field. D. Appleton and Company. \$2.

Adne (Ariadne) Dwight is a pretty young girl in a small town in Ontario. Since apparently there are no boys of her age, she falls in love with Dr. Corbeil, the young French-Catholic physician who has bought her late father's practice. She tries to become a Catholic and prays to the Virgin in order to win him. But he does not want her, and so she goes off with Holman Sugden, a rich and vulgar American, on a holiday to Niagara Falls. Sugden spends a great deal of money in his attempt to seduce her, and finally succeeds. The book's implication is that Adne loses her virtue because life in the "small town" is so dull. Certainly few small towns have been regarded so unsympathetically as Miss Field regards hers. There was beauty in Spoon River and Winesburg; there is none in Elysium. Indeed, there are undercurrents in "Small Town," though the story is told with the conventional novelist's objectivity throughout, which suggest nothing less than a hatred of all life. Whatever the author touches upon, whether provincial homeliness or Catholicism or love, takes on its ugliest aspect. This kind of sordidness has nothing to do with a healthy exposure of the truth; it is in no way related to the valuable naturalism of Masters or Anderson; it is simply an adroit and vulgar commercialization of a theme which they made known years ago.

*Mr. and Mrs. Pennington.* By Francis Brett Young. Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.

Francis Brett Young's latest novel is about a young English couple who meet at a popular seaside resort, fall in love and marry, take a bungalow in a modern low-price suburb, pass through a number of typical experiences as young married lovers until through folly and weakness they stand face to face with tragedy, and finally emerge from their ordeal with renewed and strengthened love. The story is very long-drawn-out. But it is told objectively and compassionately by a good craftsman. The humor of character and the dramatic conflicts are real, if somewhat mild. The principal characters, particularly the young wife, are true to life, even if some of the interlocking complications do seem a bit far-fetched. It is a novel on which one can spend some hours in relaxation without strain or undue excitement.

*The Saginaw Paul Bunyan.* By James Stevens. Woodcuts by Richard Bennett. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

Mr. Stevens's first volume of Paul Bunyan yarns came out of the Northwest country, where axmen were called "loggers." This second volume comes out of the Saginaw Valley of Michigan, another great timber country in its day, where axmen were called "lumberjacks." The leading characters are the same: Paul Bunyan himself, the "bearded and mackinawed Hercules"; Babe the Blue Ox, who rests his chin on the top of a cliff; Hels Helson, the Big Swede who hates to take a bath; and Johnny Inkslinger, "the tremendous timekeeper." These yarns are similar to those in the first volume, though naturally they are conditioned by the different locale. One of them, for example, is entitled *Why the Great Lakes Have No Whales*. One year,

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# CALL HOME THE HEART

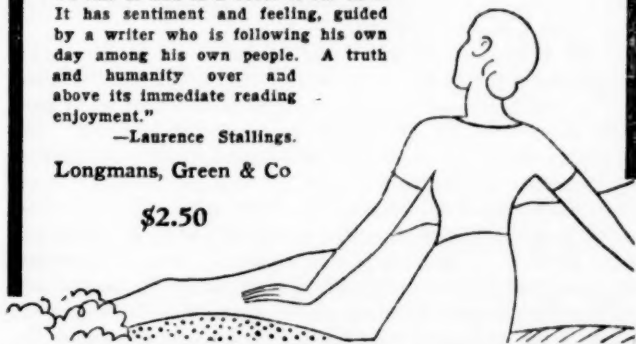
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it seems, the "Big Feller" had trouble with the logging on the "wild young rivers." Herds of whales had been in the habit of swimming up from the ocean and jumping Niagara, in order to use that part of the world as a calving and nursing ground. Paul Bunyan put blinders, bridles, bits, and saddles on them, and used them to get his logs downstream. But the whales resented such treatment; so that is why there are no whales in the Great Lakes today. Mr. Stevens says that the one heresy in telling Paul Bunyan stories is to repeat them exactly as you heard them; every narrator is obliged by the timber-country code to "cast new light" on them. One criticism might be made of the new light that Mr. Stevens has cast on Paul Bunyan: he tends to be too prosy and "correct" in his manner of writing; the stories, one feels, would have much more life if refreshed with more of the vernacular, which now is almost exclusively reserved for the dialogue. But this in no way discredits the important service that Mr. Stevens has performed to American letters in collecting these wonderful legends.

*An American Epoch.* By Howard W. Odum. Henry Holt and Company. \$3.50.

Dr. Odum, editor of "Social Forces," is well known for his creative work at the University of North Carolina. During the last ten years nearly a dozen volumes, in whole or in part, have come from his pen, some of them distinguished. "An American Epoch" is a sort of sociological history (almost an encyclopedia) of the political, social, and geographical forces which have shaped the South since 1850, with a short forecast of the future. The story is told mainly by vivid, impressionistic word pictures. The book is also a novel in reverse technique; the characters occupy a subordinate place, while the background, painted with a rare blending of the scientific with the artistic spirit, is far and away the principal theme. At the outset Dr. Odum introduces two typically Southern characters, Uncle John and the Old Major, private and officer in the Civil War, whose lives, together with those of their children and grandchildren, span the "epoch" under consideration. Uncle John and the Old Major, while sketched merely in behavioristic outline, are realistically done. They give continuity to the story, and they afford the author an opportunity to let us see the changing South through the eyes and philosophies of Southern men in the midst of life. The story abounds in contrasts and paradoxes, because the South itself abounds in those qualities. "An American Epoch" is the result of long and profound research, and no one who pretends to discuss the South with any authority can afford to leave it unread.

*The New Conceptions of Matter.* By C. G. Darwin. The Macmillan Company. \$3.

This is the best non-technical exposition of the new quantum mechanics that has yet appeared. Professor Darwin has taken upon himself the task of expounding all the details of the theory while avoiding mathematical concepts and equations, and he has well succeeded. The book does not make as light reading as Eddington or Jeans, but it is more complete in its scientific subject matter and does not go off on philosophical tangents. It has also the advantage of having been written after the new conceptions have become stabilized and after the initial philosophical excitement has worn off. Professor Darwin, it should be added, follows throughout the wave conception of matter, which is far easier to visualize (although mathematically equivalent) than the conception of matter as made up of ultimate particles with paradoxical mechanical behavior. On the wave theory the paradox enters more quietly, so to speak, when we have to regard the elementary waves as coagulating for some unknown reason into groups with corpuscular properties. But once this fact is granted, the whole theoretical structure of the new mechanics takes on a marked clarity and harmony.

## Drama

### The Shepherd's Saw of Might

INTO the post-holiday season, hitherto dismal enough, a delightful play has come at last. The author is that same John Van Druten whose "After All" recently bored its audience to extinction, and the new comedy is as quiet, as well-bred, and as innocuous as that unfortunate effort. But "There's Always Juliet" (Empire Theater) neatly turns the trick which was fumbled before, and demonstrates conclusively that something *can* be made out of materials as tenuous as those which its author is apparently determined to choose.

Like so many other English playwrights of his particular generation, Mr. Van Druten carefully avoids anything inherently dramatic or clearly "significant." Obviously embarrassed by raucous modernity, as well as by old-fashioned histrionics, he likes to write about nice people whose sophistication is mildly gracious and whose lives are too well ordered to be superficially exciting. But for once at least he has escaped from the dull stuffiness likely to surround people of the sort that he admires, and he has achieved a little romance which unfolds itself upon the stage with a genuine simplicity touched here and there with unexpected beauty.

Two young people—an English girl and an American architect—meet casually, fall in love, and decide to marry. That is literally all, for there are no misunderstandings, no complications, and no real difficulties. But so charmingly is their story told, so gently and so simply are they characterized, that it is quite enough. One follows with a kind of delighted surprise the eager, incredulous unfolding of a mutual passion, and one almost forgets to admire the extraordinary if tenuous talent of the author who can thus communicate to a cynical audience the charm of a phenomenon so common that we can seldom be really aware of it. There is an amazing, unobtrusive, almost unconscious dexterity in the handling of the incidents through which the two leading characters discover each other, but it is not the dexterity which really counts. Mr. Van Druten has a freshness of feeling, an imaginative participation in the incident, which none of the brilliant technicians of the stage from Molnar on down could imitate any more than they could imitate the poetry of Shakespeare. By implication he can exclaim, "Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?" and make that phrase seem, not the dull proverb that it usually is, but the thrilling, triumphant discovery which Marlowe announced to a responsive world.

Superficially, there is nothing unusual about the hero and heroine concerned. They are prosperous, cultivated, and decorously modern young people who know as well as their equals what the world is made of. But their problem is to say what they have to say and do what they have to do in a language and a world no longer keyed to passion of just that sort. They can no more break out into the rapturous poetry of Romeo and Juliet than they can hasten off to a hermit to get themselves joined. But neither can they talk or behave like two young desperadoes out of Aldous Huxley, and so they must play their adventures out on a plane lower than the plane of Shakespeare and yet too high not to be faintly embarrassing for sophisticated youngsters little accustomed to any phrases except those of the smart drawing-room. They must find the language as well as the behavior suited to their own experience, and the play is the record of their effort to do so. Mr. Van Druten is not asking us to believe them more than they actually are; he does not lift them above their own age and generation; but he does convincingly show how something of the miraculous may still



ding to the phenomenon he is describing. The shepherd's saw is still a "saw of might." There are only four persons in the well-nigh perfect cast headed by Edna Best and Herbert Marshall.

"Blessed Event" (Longacre Theater) belongs to that rather extensive class of entertainments which are "good shows" without being "interesting plays." The present one happens to deal with the career of a big backstairs and keyhole man who regales the town with a daily column of gossip in a tabloid newspaper, and it is written with that breathless speed and colloquial, wisecracking cleverness characteristic of the "hard-boiled" melodramas of the moment. Apparently it started out to be a cynical exposé of a current racket, but somewhere about the middle it decided to be simply an exciting story instead, so that by the time it is over the villain has become a hero, and the moral (if any) seems to be that blackmail is one of the most useful of justice's tools. When the Peeping Tom in question wantonly ruins the life of a young girl by spreading a scandal, the audience seems justified in believing him a thoroughgoing scoundrel; but when he sets out to crash the gate of a night club to which he has been forbidden, and when gangsters set an ambush to shoot him, then the interest naturally changes sides, and there is obviously nothing to do except write a last scene in which he is breathlessly dictating into the telephone a story which will save a girl from the gallows. The play is exciting enough and is probably destined to success, but the authors' contribution to the discussion of the ethics of journalism would have been a little bit clearer if they had made up their own minds whether their central character was a crusader or a cad.

"Monkey" (Mansfield Theater) is a conventional detective melodrama whose novelty consists largely in the fact that this time the detective is a garrulous old man. It is not unentertaining, and something a little more may be said of "The Fatal Alibi" (Booth Theater), another detective play made unusual by the presence of that extraordinary actor Charles Laughton. Mr. Laughton is one of those very rare performers who can change, not only his lines, but his whole personality as well. Those who saw him as the defeated wretch of "Payment Deferred" will be amazed to discover him transformed into a jolly and very amusing Frenchman in "The Fatal Alibi."

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

## Films

### A Chinese Episode

THE direction and the photography, both sound and silent, of "Shanghai Express" (Rialto Theater) are of such excellence that only a first-rate story could match them. Unfortunately, the plot is hackneyed and intricate; what is more serious, it seems to be a superimposed mechanism rather than an organic part of the production. The action takes place aboard an express as it proceeds to Shanghai or in stations along the way. But from the opening scene in the railway station at Peiping to the end of the run in Shanghai, the train is the real protagonist of the piece, and its journey provides the most thrilling action. Railway trains and stations, the clang of bells, and the nostalgic whistle of locomotives are intrinsically exciting. The device of numberless swift kaleidoscopic shots is, of course, not new. But the vibrancy and freshness of treatment must be credited to the direction of Josef von Sternberg. It is he who makes the illusion of a train traveling through strange, war-ridden China as convincingly real as the Paramount news release from Manchuria which precedes the pic-

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ture. The characterizations are real, too, especially the lesser ones, which belong rather to the setting than to the story. It is only in so far as these very real characters are forced to take part in an unlikely plot that the illusion fades. Marlene Dietrich, along with the other principals, is overpowered by the background against which she performs, but she is as decoratively beautiful as ever, and though she continues to pose rather than act, her posing has become more restrained and more appealing.

Salesmanship has been ridiculed a great many times on both stage and screen, but it is doubtful whether satire so completely cynical in its implications as "High Pressure" could have come out of Hollywood in the dear dead days before prosperity disappeared just around the corner. The story revolves about a promotion campaign in behalf of an invention which converts sewage into artificial rubber. It is an honest venture. That is, both Mr. Guinsberg, who has bought the rights, and Gar Evans who is promoting it, believe it to be both honest and fundamentally sound; and the Golden Gate Artificial Rubber Company (the promoter points out that there must be gold in the title) is strictly legal. From the magnificent offices—the \$25,000 "front" which the super-promoter insists upon and Mr. Guinsberg pays for—the word goes forth that another trough of profit has been opened for the dear public. The word goes forth in the "lines" of lesser salesmen whose spirits are fired by a pep talk that must make many a former salesman feel sheepish. It is hardly necessary to relate that in the midst of all the splendor the inventor turns up missing; and that only after fruitless scouring operations in New Jersey is he finally found in the person of a disreputable-looking creature who has been trying for days to see the president of the Golden Gate. The president, incidentally, is a professional chosen not for his connections but for his presence.

It is not the fault of Mr. Evans or Mr. Guinsberg, of course, that the inventor turns out to be slightly insane—a fact which dawns upon them when he asserts that he can also make hens lay Easter eggs that are already colored. Like many another business house, the Golden Gate Artificial Rubber Company finds that it has put too much confidence in its investment. The final touch of satire, apparently unconscious, is provided by the Hollywood device to bring about a happy ending. Obviously, the always innocent stockholders could not be allowed to lose their greedily invested pennies. To avoid this unhappy, not to say immoral, outcome, the Golden Gate Company is bought up by real rubber interests, the price being charged to a "nuisance fund" which we can only hope is not passed on to the ultimate consumer or a lot of other stockholders. "High Pressure" is directed by Mervyn Le Roy at a breathless pace which is just right. William Powell, as the dynamic promoter with unlimited enthusiasm and just a touch of superstition, is excellent, and he is supported by a very well-chosen cast that functions smoothly, both separately and together.

The latest vehicle of that highly competent actor, Mr. George Arliss, "The Man Who Played God" (Warner Theater), turns out to be an elementary and slightly smug exercise in the old problem "Is There a God?" The theological conclusions of Gouverneur Morris, from whose story the film was made, lend a quaint air, as of 1900, to a production otherwise mildly interesting.

"Das Lied Ist Aus" (Europa Theater) is one of the better examples of the German film operetta which became a vogue with "Zwei Herzen." The marionette show, which the completely arbitrary motivation of German operettas permits to be shown at great length, is especially well done and very amusing. "The Song Is Over" is pleasant, leisurely entertainment, particularly since it is reinforced by an exploit of Mickey Mouse on the one hand and an exciting interlude in the French Alps on the other.

MARGARET MARSHALL



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